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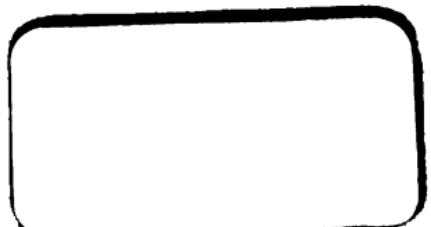


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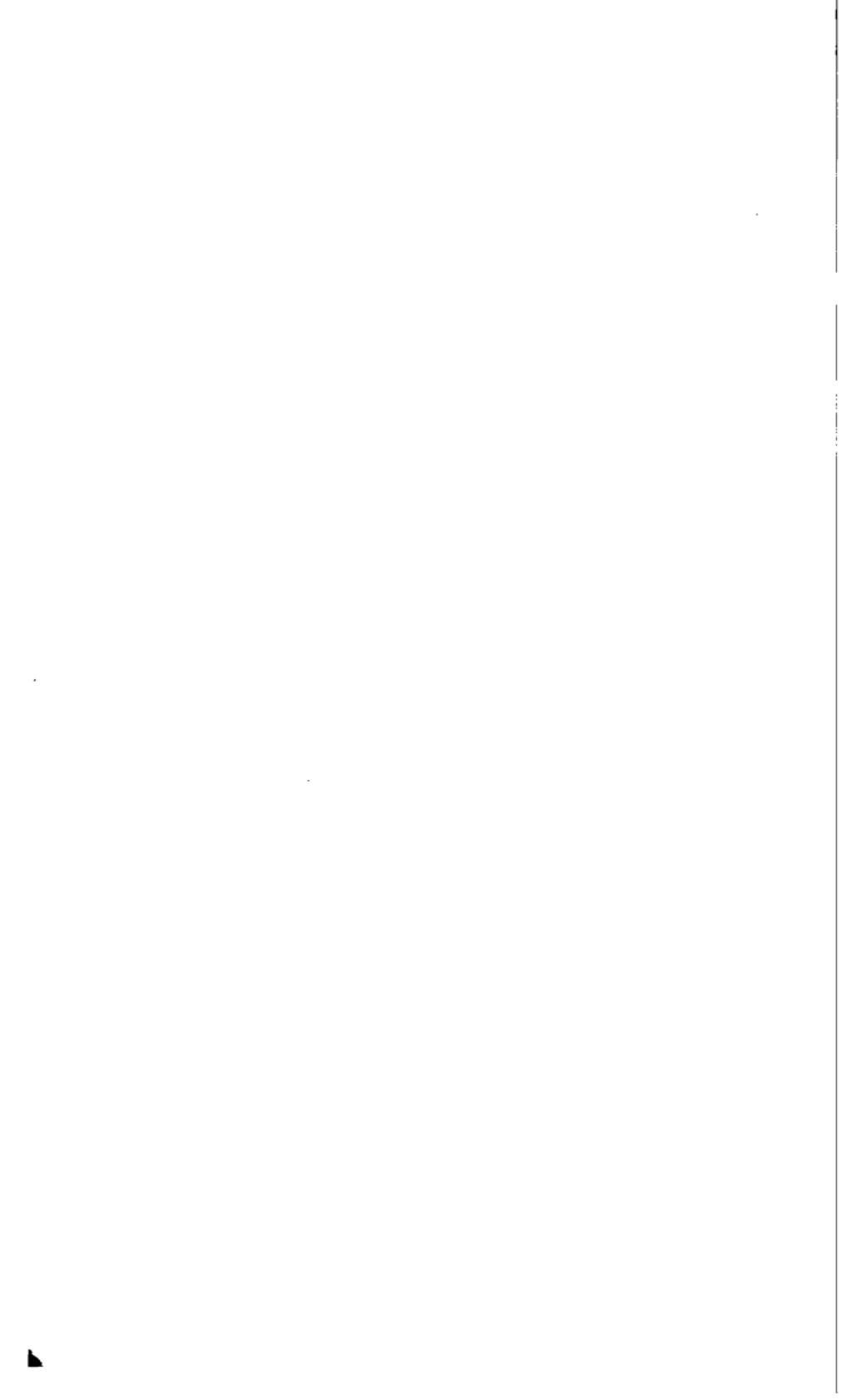
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# THE PLEASURES

OF A

# BOOK-WORM //

BY

J. ROGERS REES

"For him delicious flavors dwell  
In books as in old Muscatel"

—SHERMAN

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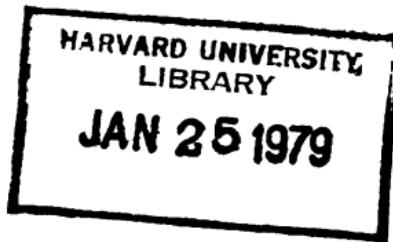
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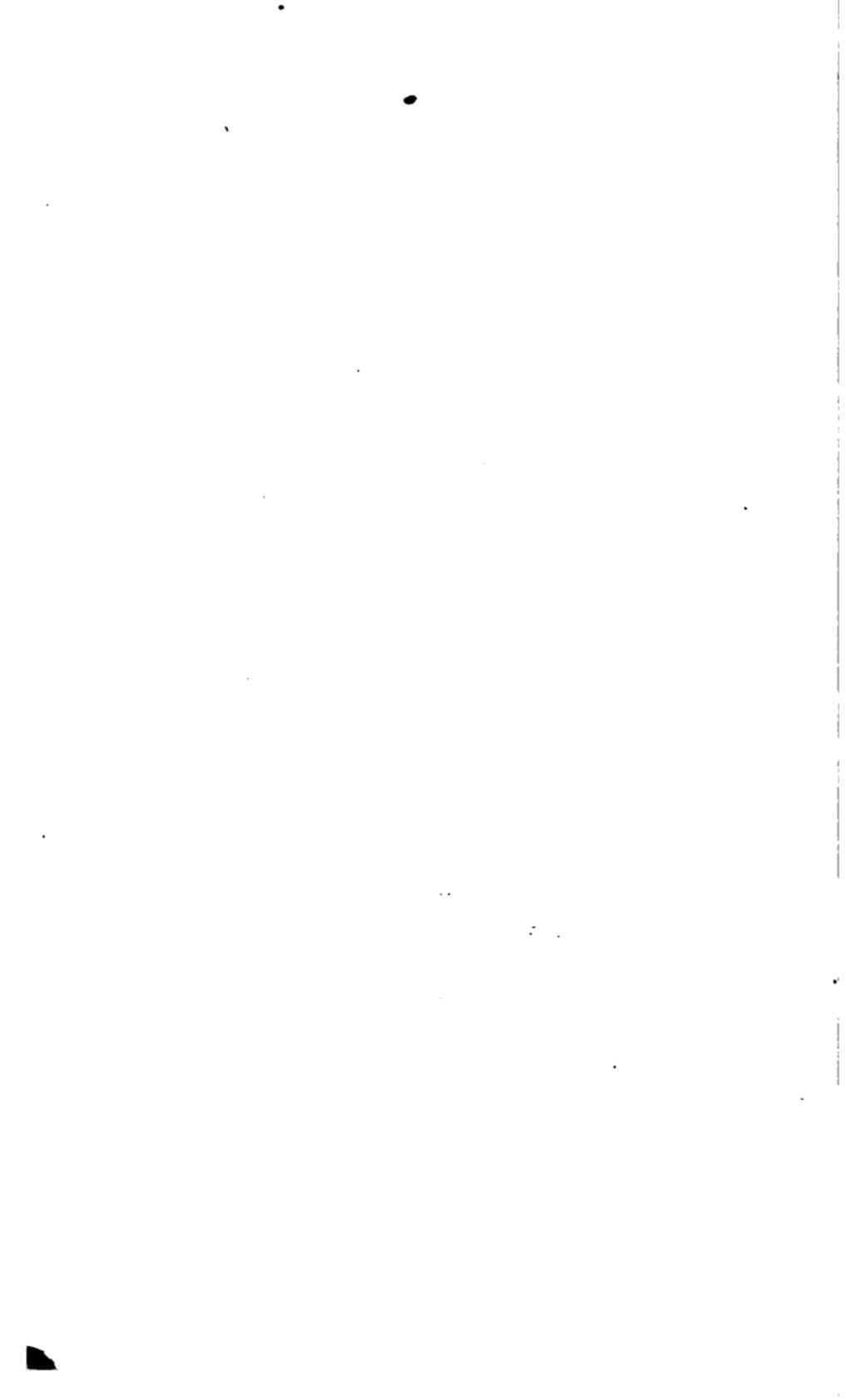
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## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
CONCERNING BOOKS AND LOVERS OF BOOKS . . . . .	I
HOME AND BOOKS: GLIMPSES OF EARTHLY PARADISE. . . . .	35
THE ROMANCE AND REALITY OF DEDI- CATIONS . . . . .	82
AN ODD CORNER IN A BOOK-LOVER'S STUDY . . . . .	141
GENIUS AND CRITICISM . . . . .	157
ON THE PURSUIT OF LITERATURE IN ODD MOMENTS . . . . .	184





TO

**THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH**

*(Poet and Novelist),*

**I** dedicate these pages.





## CONCERNING BOOKS AND LOVERS OF BOOKS.

### I.

“I PICKED it up” has become a recognised phrase in all kinds of collecting manias, and in simple English means that for a few pence, shillings, or pounds—very much, of course, below its actual value—an article of some peculiar and undoubted worth has been secured. When a man declares with gusto to a friend, “I picked it up,” it is tantamount to a boast, on his part, of superior knowledge as well as good luck. The unexpressed sentence runs just thus: “You see this article was for sale; I knew its value, but the seller

didn't ; therefore my knowledge was to me power, inasmuch as through it I was enabled to take advantage of the seller and to 'pick up' what I wanted for a mere song."

In the list of numerous hobbies,\* that of accumulating books of more than ordinary interest, especially books which on account of associations have become unique, has procured for itself quite a prominent position. And why should it not ? Carefully and judiciously pursued, the collecting of books is not expensive, and is likely to ruin no one ;† carried out as the result of knowledge, it is a good investment for

\* And it is a curious list. In July, 1883, Messrs. Puttick and Simpson sold by auction "A Unique Collection of Illustrated Matchbox Covers."

† "If a man spends lavishly on his library, you call him mad—a bibliomaniac. But you never call one a horse-maniac, though men ruin themselves every day by their horses, and you do not hear of people ruining themselves by their books."—Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*.

one's spare sovereigns ; as an occupation for odd moments it is pleasurable, and just exciting enough to keep the head in healthy exercise and the blood warm and freely flowing ; as co-ordinate with a love of what the books actually contain of wisdom or imagination, it is elevating and purifying ; as dependent on a hero-worship of great authors, it lifts one up through sympathy into communion with them, thus giving a mental access to their friendship which external circumstances can neither hinder nor take away. In short, it seems to me that a great love of books has in it at all times the power to enlarge men's hearts, and to fill them with wider and truly educating sympathies. This education may be misunderstood and neglected by the many, but its effects are as certain and decided as those which came to Hawthorne's Ernest,

from his persistent fellowship with The Great Stone Face.

The pleasure of possessing a unique volume does not lie solely in the fact that by so much one is wealthier than anybody else at the same time ; it depends rather on a laying hold of the associations which constitute the real value of the book. The worth of a copy of the first edition of an early work by a famous author, arises not so much from its containing the original expression of thoughts, which in subsequent issues get so polished or twisted as to become, in many instances, scarcely recognisable, as that it tells to one capable of creeping into the author's soul the tale of his hopes and fears, his ambitions and disappointments, his yearnings and successes. The book speaks, to an appreciative possessor, of the circumstances, happy or sorrowful, under which it was conceived, written,

published ; the difficulty or ease with which it found its way through the press to the public ; and its reception, favourable or otherwise, by critics and general readers. Nothing, in short, is too trivial about a book to interest the genuine book-lover ; the amount gained or lost by its publication ; the particulars of the disposal of the copyright ; the letters or opinions of competent judges regarding it, all help to fill up the nook allotted in his mind to that particular work.

If, however, the book, by dedication or inscription, carries indication of a friendship existing between its author and one of the world's great men, so far is its value, as a centre of association of ideas, enhanced. If, in addition to this, it bears upon it, by autograph marks or otherwise, unmistakable proof of having been read and loved by some famous

character, its worth becomes ten-fold increased. One begins then to base its value upon its weight in gold.

As illustrative of these remarks, there lie before me now upon my study-table eight volumes of no particular intrinsic value; their worth arising from associations shall, however, be decided upon by my book-loving readers. But be it first simply mentioned that to me they are valued treasures.

Let us begin with this octavo in boards. Its title-page runs thus: *British Galleries of Art. London: Printed for G. and W. B. Whittaker, Ave-Maria-Lane. 1824.* On its flyleaf, in Hazlitt's autograph, is inscribed: "To J. Northcote, Esq., with the respects of the Author." Indirectly, this book repeats to me the story of Hazlitt's connection and quarrel with Northcote, the famous

painter. During Campbell's editorship of the *New Monthly Magazine*, the former wrote for it a series of papers entitled "Boswell Redivivus," which professed to contain the substance of conversations between the author (Hazlitt) and Northcote. It is, however, pretty certain that often in these papers Hazlitt recorded his own views, indifferent as to whether they appeared as coming from Northcote or himself. Occasionally sharp and bitter sayings about living personages were given utterance to, and in one instance a few unpleasant truths concerning a certain Dr. Mudge, at that time a celebrated Dissenting minister, and a friend of Sir Joshua Reynolds, got mixed up in the reported conversations. Just after the appearance of the paper in question—No. VI. of the series—P. G. Patmore called upon Northcote, and thus describes the interview

and its sequel in *My Friends and Acquaintance*:

“‘I am very ill, indeed,’ said he, in reply to my inquiry as to his health. ‘I did not think I should have lived. That monster has nearly killed me.’

“I inquired what he meant.

“‘Why, that diabolical Hazlitt. Have you seen what lies he has been telling about me in his cursed “Boswell Redivivus?” I have been nearly dead ever since the paper appeared. Why, the man is a demon. Nothing human was ever so wicked. Do you see the dreadful hobble he has got me into with the Mudges? Not that I said what he has put down about Mudge. *But even if I had*, who could have supposed that anyone in a human form would have come here to worm himself into my confidence, and get me to talk as if I had been thinking

aloud, and then go and publish it all to the world ! Why, they will think we go snacks in the paltry profits of his treachery. It will kill me. What am I to do about it ? I would give a hundred pounds to have the paper cancelled. But that would do no good now. It has gone all over the world. I have never had a moment's rest since it appeared. I sent to Mr. Colburn to come over to me about it ; but he took no notice of my message, so I went over to him. But they wouldn't let me see him ; and all I could get out of his people was, that they would tell him what I said. I told them to tell him that it would be the death of me. But Campbell has been a little more civil about it. I wrote him a letter—*such a letter !* I'll show it you. And he has replied very handsomely, and seems to be touched by my situation. At any rate,' added he,

bitterly, 'I have put a spoke into the wheel of that diabolical wretch Hazlitt.'

"And then he showed me the letter he had written to Campbell, and Campbell's reply. I think I never read anything more striking in its way than his letter to Campbell. Though brief, it was a consummate composition—pathetic even to the excitement of tears—painting the dreadful state of his mind under the blow which the (alleged) *treachery* of Hazlitt had given to it, and treating the thing as a deliberate attempt to 'bring his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave.' I particularly seem to remember that these very words were used in it. The whole tendency of the letter was to create an inference in Campbell's mind that the thing had come upon the writer like a thunder-clap, and that even in regard to those parts of the conver-

sations which were truly reported (which he denied to be the case in the matter in question), he was the most betrayed and ill-used person in the world. And all this in the face of the fact that the paper of which he complained was the *sixth* of a series that had appeared in the (then) most popular literary periodical of the day ; that they had all appeared there with his full knowledge and consent ; that he had, ever since the commencement of them, been almost daily complimented on the conspicuous figure he was cutting in his new character of the best converser of the day ; and that a considerable portion of what had appeared of the 'Boswell Redivivus' up to that time had consisted (on Northcote's part, at least) of depreciating estimates of many of the most conspicuous *living* writers, artists, etc.

" It is, of course, with reference to

these facts that I have spoken of Northcote's feelings as 'ludicrous,' on this unlooked-for exposure of truths of which he did not wish to be known as the author: for the astonishing force and pungency of the *unpalatable* truths that he put forth about every *living* individual of whom he spoke (sometimes in their presence, and even to themselves), and the double edge and effect that were given to his words by the exquisitely simple and naïve manner in which he uttered them—as if an inspired *infant* were speaking—was the characteristic of his talk. And he knew all this better than anybody could tell him, and evidently prided himself upon it.

"Campbell's reply to Northcote was, I remember, in a tone precisely correspondent with the letter which called for it. He declared his unmitigated horror at the outrage that

had been committed on Northcote's feelings ; absolved himself from all participation in it by naively stating that he had not seen a line of the paper till its publication, having been absent from town on other business ; and declared that 'the diabolical Hazlitt should never write another line in the magazine during *his* management of it.\* These, I think, were his very words.

\* \* \* \*

"The sequel of the history of these conversations includes the most characteristic point of all. Not very long after the incident I have referred to above, the conversations were republished in a separate form, with large and valuable additions from the same source, and obtained

\* This letter was offered for sale by a second-hand bookseller some time ago, and, according to Percy Fitzgerald, contained the following, which differs but slightly from the above : "The infernal Hazlitt shall never more be permitted to write for the *New Monthly*."

through the same means and agent ; and this with the knowledge and tacit consent of Northcote himself, and with all their obnoxious truths unexpunged, excepting those in which Northcote's own personal connexions were concerned ; and the 'diabolical Hazlitt' continued to write as usual in the *New Monthly*, under Campbell's (ostensible) editorship !"

The title-page of the volume next claiming our attention, and which once belonged to William Johnson Fox, minister of Finsbury Chapel and M.P. for Oldham, bears the imprint: *Discourses by William Ellery Channing. Boston : Published by Charles Bowen. 1832.* On the first blank page, in the handwriting of the author, is the following: "Rev. W. J. Fox, from his friend Wm. E. Channing." What a binding link this between two great souls, each eager and earnest in his proclama-

tion of the necessity of liberty for the individual conscience, and yet so divergent in attachment to the trifles which get to be insisted on in a ministry of any duration and influence! What increase the interest and peculiar value of this volume are the corrections, nine in number, in Channing's own handwriting, of errors which had crept into the text in its passage through the press. Several of these corrections are wanting in both *Barker's* and the *Centennial* editions of Channing's Collected Works.

The next three volumes are—the *Burns* which belonged to Dr. John Aitken Carlyle (brother of Thomas Carlyle, and translator of Dante), of whom the author of *Sartor Resartus* spoke when, upon being offered the degree of LL.D., he excused himself by saying that he had a brother a Doctor, and that if two Dr. Carlyles

should appear in Paradise mistakes might arise; the *Byron* once possessed by William Harrison Ainsworth the novelist, and which bears his book-plate; and a presentation copy, in the author's autograph, of *Lyric Offerings, by Laman Blanchard*, published by William Harrison Ainsworth, Old Bond Street, in 1828, and inscribed to Charles Lamb. What a delightful conjunction of three great names, all in a thin red-boarded volume!—about which, however, Charles Lamb said, “I shall put them up among my poetical treasures;” and Robert Browning, “What would I do to once again run (real running, for I was a boy) to Bond Street from Camberwell, and come back with a small book brimful of the sweetest and truest things in the world!”

A volume of Wordsworth next claims our notice: *The Poetical Works*

of William Wordsworth. Complete in one volume. Paris. Published by A. and W. Galignani, No. 18, Rue Vivienne. 1828.\* This book once belonged to a friend of the poet, who

\* Mr. S. C. Hall, in his *Book of Memories*, refers to this issue in the following paragraph: "One morning in 1831, when Mr. Wordsworth honoured me with his company at breakfast, our talk fell on his 'lack of popularity.' I, who was among the most devout of his worshippers, sought to argue him out of so depressing a belief, and I showed how I had become so familiar with his writings by placing before him a copy of Galignani's edition of his works, collected in a form, and at a price, that brought the whole of them within my reach. I expressed a belief that of that book many hundreds, probably thousands, were annually sold in England. That led to an appointment with a view to inquiry, and next day I accompanied him to a bookseller's in Piccadilly—a firm with the encouraging and ominous name of 'Sustenance and Stretch.' The sale of the work, as of all English reprints, was strictly 'prohibited.' I asked for a copy of Galignani's edition; it was produced. I asked if I could have six copies, and was told I could. Fifty copies? yes, at a month's notice. And further questions induced conviction that by that one house alone between two hundred and three hundred copies have been sold during the year. I believe Wordsworth was far more pleased than vexed to know that, although he derived no profit from them, at least his poems were read."

resided at Cardiff, and has inserted in it in Wordsworth's autograph, and dated "The Eve of St. Swithin, 1848," ten verses of the "Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg," which are here, for the nonce, christened "Yarrow Re-visited."

Thus far we have had Art, Theology, and Poetry. Next come Politics: *Seven Letters on the Recent Politics of Switzerland*, by George Grote, Esq., author of a "History of Greece," published by Newby in 1847. This also is a presentation copy in the autograph of the author, who sends with it his "best compliments and regards." What Lord Palmerston would have given to have been the happy recipient of this volume may be gathered from the following anecdote related in Mrs. Grote's admirable life of her husband: "Some months subsequent to this volume's

appearance, Mr. Newby was applied to one morning by Lord Palmerston's private secretary, for a copy of the 'Letters on Switzerland.'

" ' Have not a copy left, sir ! '

" ' Well, but you *must* get me one somehow or another.'

" ' Wherefore so urgent, sir ? '

" ' Because,' replied the secretary, ' Lord Palmerston, being at Windsor yesterday, Prince Albert manifested unusual earnestness on the subject of Swiss disputes, and soon asked Lord Palmerston whether he had read Grote's little book. Lord Palmerston replied he had not seen it. " Then," said the Prince, " you cannot be qualified to enter fairly upon the discussion of the affairs of Switzerland ; pray go and study it directly." ' "

And yet another presentation copy, also in the author's autograph ! *Three Speeches delivered in the House of Com-*

*mons in favour of a measure for an Extension of Copyright, by T. N. Talfourd, Serjeant-at-Law, published by Moxon, in 1840, and dedicated to William Ewart Gladstone, Esq., M.P.* A remarkable association, again, of well-known names! — Gladstone; Thomas Noon Talfourd, the friend and biographer of Lamb; and Moxon, who married Lamb's adopted daughter, Emma Isola. To these speeches are added, "Petitions to the House of Commons in favour of the Copyright Bill," by a number of famous authors, to wit, amongst others, Wordsworth, Carlyle, and Hood. From a note affixed to Hood's petition we learn that it "was thought too richly studded with jests to be presented to the House of Commons; but its wit embodies too much wisdom to allow of its exclusion from this place." And, forsooth, a truly marvellous

composition it is ! Never was production like to it exhibited before the august assembly of our nation's law-makers ; and yet each of its quips and cranks throws abundant light upon the mooted question.

## II.

THE experiences of a book-collector often bring him into close connection with strange characters, and lead him to explore marvellously queer and out-of-the-way corners. I have in my mind's eye just now an old dealer in the second-hand-book line, to whom I am indebted for many first editions, and who, certainly a strange product as regards himself and his surroundings, is well-deserving of enshrinement in the best work of the contemporary novelist. He once had a little corner-shop all to himself, filled

with many truly desirable books; but unfavourable circumstances pitted themselves against him, and he was compelled to "put the shutters up." Now, early each day, he goes the round of his customers with the morning newspapers, upon the sale of which he chiefly depends for a livelihood. A little later on in the day he makes another round, this time with a few carefully-picked volumes—the gods only know where he gets them. With his serious old grizzled face he appears at the office, and quietly hands across

"A small, rare volume, black with tarnished gold," and lo! behold it is the very book which silently in our heart of hearts we had desired for many a long day. He knows his customers and their several requirements, and in answer to an interrogatory look, meaning: How the deuce came you

to know I wanted this ? he returns a grim smile, the unwashed, unkempt, thought-reading old sinner that he is ! Occasionally, of an odd afternoon, I have sought him out sitting like a big spider up among his treasures. His residence and store-room are two attics innumerable steps up an old house, the easily accessible rooms of which are let out as offices. What a glorious hunting-ground is here, notwithstanding the filthy plight one's hands and clothes get into long before the hunt is over ! And then, having secured an armful of treasures, and paid the price, one prepares to descend. But not so quickly, my friend ! You may have gone down a dozen steps or so to the first turn of the stairs, but here your progress is stayed. The late owner of your treasures has perched himself above, and having thrown his arms across the balus-

trade, is bending over, assuring you in a confidential tone that he would rather have given *you* the volumes than have taken their full value for them from many another gentleman.

“Because,” whispers the insinuating old grizzly, “I know *you* will care for them and love them as I have done.”

This is all very well, no doubt, with its fringe of pathos, especially the hint about the price, when all the while there lies in his pocket, to the utmost sou, the sum first asked by him for his books. And yet with it all, I honestly believe that the extraction of a single volume from his garret-store gives a tug at the old boy’s sensibilities, sharp and painful as that attendant on the drawing of a tooth.

Another character pleads with my pen for portraiture—this one a book-buyer. Though he has never been

in receipt of an income exceeding £200 a year, yet has he found ways, by dint of self-denial and severe economy, to gather around him an admirable library. His wife, lovingly sympathetic with him in his tastes, rarely has a word of expostulation to offer against the expenditure in this manner of the common fund. His own conscience, however, troubles him occasionally, and bids him remember the total of the various *small* sums lately parted with in exchange for odd volumes. So the next book carried home is stuffed beneath his waistcoat or down into the bottom of his overcoat-pocket until time and opportunity favour its transfer to a vacant nook on one of his shelves.

“Hollo, Frank!” his wife exclaims sometimes, “when did you get this book? I have not seen it before.”

“Oh,” answers Frank, “you

must have been sleeping, Nellie ; that volume has been there a *long while* now."

" You see," he said to me one day, when we were chatting together about books and book-buying, " it is all very well to buy, buy, buy, when a fellow can't help it ; and I know Nellie would say but little were I to cram every room with purchases ; but somehow it strikes me occasionally that there are trifles needed about the house which would add greatly to my wife's comfort ; if so, my book-buying at this point merges into selfishness. The worst of it is, however, this view of the case does not always stay with me."

Poor near-sighted friend, not to see clearly and definitely that many household comforts must of necessity be wanting when any part of a narrow £200 is spent in his book-pursuit !

He told me that on going home one afternoon with a neat little parcel of purchases, this idea of the selfishness of the whole matter came with such force upon him, that he positively dreaded meeting his wife with her welcome, and felt more like a thief slinking to the scene of some depredation than a respectable man going home to the comfort of his own hearth-stone.

“I laid the parcel,” he said, “on the outside of the bay-window at a point where the folds of the curtains inside effectually hid it from the view of anyone within the room. Then I knocked at the door, and skipping and smiling, Nellie came to let me in. Very soon afterwards I found opportunity to raise the window, draw in my parcel, and put it carefully aside to be examined later on, and its contents arranged on a suitable shelf.”

I think this friend must be a trifle mad—just let us remember him as a third-of-a-bibliomaniac.

Then the mere perusal of a second-hand catalogue is in itself a pleasure of no mean extent. Leigh Hunt, with truth and tenderness, once said :

“A catalogue is not a mere catalogue or list of saleables, as the uninitiated may fancy. Even a common auctioneer’s catalogue of goods and chattels suggests a thousand reflections to a peruser of any knowledge. Judge then what the case must be with a catalogue of books ; the very titles of which run the rounds of the whole world, visible and invisible ; geographies—biographies—histories—loves—hates—joys—sorrows—cookeries—sciences—fashion,—and eternity ! We speak on this subject from the most literal experience ; for often and often have we cut open a new catalogue of old books, with all

the fervour and ivory folder of a first love ; often read one at tea ; nay, at dinner ; and have put crosses against dozens of volumes in the list, out of the pure imagination of buying them, the possibility being out of *the question !*"

The very errors which creep into the letterpress of a catalogue are amusing. Were such a thing possible, methinks that many old authors must needs turn in their graves at the sacrilege daily carried on in this direction. Before me just now, and issued at no distant date, are the following advertisements : "Lord Bacon's *New Atlantic*, edited with Notes by J. A. St. John ; 12 mo., cloth, 3s., 1852."—"Helen Plumtre's *Christ and Christendom* [Boyle Lectures for 1866] ; 8vo., cloth, 6s., 1867."—W. C. Prince's *I Go a Fishing* ; thick crown 8vo., cloth, 2s. 3d., 1873"—And the list could be extended *ad libitum*.

A careful and cautious collector soon distinguishes the *dear* catalogue from the *cheap*, notwithstanding the practice (which cannot be sufficiently deprecated) of some book-sellers of cataloguing volumes which they never had in their possession at perhaps a tenth or twentieth part of their true value. Of course in reply to the order for the volume thus advertised comes the inevitable: "We regret," etc. A thorough-going book-buyer, however, cares little whether the catalogue be issued by an expensive house or not. The book is required upon his shelves, and it must be had. This is generally the state in which even the *cautious* buyer is found at last. The book *must* be had, dear or cheap, and consequently is sent for.

In book-hunting, the prime object is to have something to hunt for—something for which auction-sales are

to be frequented, catalogues perused, old stalls examined, and book-boxes searched. One need not take to collecting Elzevirs or Aldines if his pocket be other than deep ; let him rather look for a copy of each issue of such books as *The Secretes of the reverende Maister Alexis of Piemount* ;\* *The Oxford Sausage*, the quaint wood-cuts of the first edition (1764) of which are attributed to Bewick, although at that date he was scarcely eleven years of age, and was not apprenticed till three years afterwards ; and *The Oeconomy of Human Life*. However, this is but a hint, and the volumes here mentioned may be supplemented or supplanted by

\* The copy in the possession of the writer (dated 1563-68) bears the two following curious inscriptions in the handwriting of previous owners : " Alexander Jones, His Book ; The Lord of heaven upon him Look, and when his passing Bell Doth Toll, The Lord of heaven Reward his soul. September ye 9th, 1787 ;" and " Harry Row, his hand And pen. God Save king george and all his men."

others according to the taste or requirements of the collector. Also worth having, if it can be secured clean and uncut, with Garrick's portrait unspotted, and measuring in its original boards  $5\frac{1}{2}$  by  $8\frac{1}{2}$ , is Thomas Davies's "*Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick, Esq.* Two vols. Printed for the Author, and Sold at his Shop in Great Russell Street, Covent-Garden, 1780."

### III.

WHAT a delightful heterogeneity pervades a book-lover's collection, even if it results only from the difference in size of first editions ! How perkily, on the shelf upon which my eyes now rest, does the little 12mo. *Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo*, by Southey, shoulder it alongside his bigger brother in 4to., *Roderick, the Last of the Goths* ! There also are the big *Odes and Epistles* and

the little *Fables for the Holy Alliance* of Moore, in close propinquity. Certainly the value of a book, be it intrinsic or adventitious, does not depend on its size!

A certain amount of pleasure is to be obtained on a wet evening from the arranging and sorting of one's treasures. Perhaps during the week a volume on Gipsies, or Wales, or Occult Science has been "picked up," and must needs be given a place with proper associates. So a book has to be taken out here and placed there, in what for years has been the resting-place of another, at which a general confusion takes place, needing a little scheming and planning to set to rights. But of this quiet occupation we must whisper only to the initiated, and even to them in low and subdued tones.

One gets thus by degrees to understand, with rare sympathy, the affec-

tion expressed by Lamb in the quiet kiss with which he sometimes greeted his best-loved books, and the careful, fondling manner with which rare spirits handle the companions of their most blissful moments. What a broad gleam of sunshine is shot through the dark dotage of Southey's last days by his son, who thus writes: "His dearly prized books were a pleasure to him almost to the end, and he would walk slowly round his library looking at them, and taking them down mechanically." Wordsworth, on visiting the poet, found him "patting with both hands his books affectionately like a child."





## HOME AND BOOKS: GLIMPSES OF EARTHLY PARADISE.

“A little peaceful home  
Bounds all my wants and wishes ; add to this  
My book and friend, and this is happiness.”  
*Francesco Di Rioja.*

### I.

#### HOME.

WE have nothing to say against the summer, with its long sunny days, in which it sometimes seems possible to cram a very eternity of delightful existence ; but to the book-lover the winter is, emphatically, *his* season. The tinkle of the sheep-bell on the hillside and the ripple of the trout-stream, the scent of the new-mown

hay and the rustle of the breeze-bent corn, are all thoroughly enjoyable in their way; but the reader's song is of the drawn curtain and the fire-flicker, the subdued light of the lamp and the wild rush of the wind without. At such a time his books are doubly friends; they partake of his security from the raging inclemency, and share the hospitality which friend proffers friend in storm-time and in need. "My hour of inspiration," says Hawthorne, "is when the green log hisses upon the hearth, and the bright flame, brighter for the gloom of the chamber, rustles high up the chimney, and the coals drop tinkling down among the growing heaps of ashes. When the casement rattles in the gust, and the snow-flakes or the sleety raindrops pelt hard against the window-panes, then I spread out my sheet of paper, with the certainty that thoughts and fancies will gleam

forth upon it, like stars at twilight, or like violets in May."

Some of the most delightful word-pictures to be found in our literature are those in which we see great men in the midst of their books. De Quincey, with his marvellous handling of English prose, gives us this: "Let there be a cottage standing in a valley eighteen miles from any town. . . . Let the mountains be real mountains, between 3,000 and 4,000 feet high; and the cottage a real cottage—not (as a witty author has it) 'a cottage with a double coach-house'; let it be, in fact (for I must abide by the actual scene), a white cottage, embowered with flowering shrubs, so chosen as to unfold a succession of flowers upon the walls, and clustering round the windows through all the months of spring, summer, and autumn—beginning, in fact, with May roses, and ending with

jasmine. Let it, however, *not* be spring, nor summer, nor autumn—but winter, in his sternest shape. . . . Surely everybody is aware of the divine pleasures which attend a winter fireside; candles at four o'clock, warm hearthrugs, tea, a fair tea-maker, shutters closed, curtains flowing in ample draperies on the floor; whilst the wind and rain are raging audibly without,

“‘And at the doors and windows seem to call,  
As heaven and earth they would together mell;  
Yet the least entrance find they none at all;  
Whence sweeter grows our rest secure in massy  
hall.’

*Castle of Indolence.*

• • • • But here, to save myself the trouble of too much verbal description, I will introduce a painter, and give him directions for the rest of the picture. Painters do not like white cottages, unless a good deal weather-stained; but as the reader now understands that it is a winter

night, his services will not be required except for the inside of the house.

“ Paint me then a room seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a half feet high. This, reader, is somewhat ambitiously styled in my family the drawing-room ; but being contrived ‘a double debt to pay,’ it is also, and more justly, termed the library ; for it happens that books are the only article of property in which I am richer than my neighbours. Of these I have about five thousand, collected gradually since my eighteenth year. Therefore, painter, put as many as you can into this room. Make it populous with books ; and, furthermore, paint me a good fire ; and furniture plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar. And near the fire paint me a tea-table, and (as it is clear that no

creature can come to see one such a stormy night), place only two cups and saucers on the tea-tray; and if you know how to paint such a thing, symbolically or otherwise, paint me an eternal teapot—eternal *à parte ante*, and *à parte post*; for I usually drink tea from eight o'clock at night to four o'clock in the morning. And, as it is very unpleasant to make tea, or to pour it out for one's self, paint me a lovely young woman sitting at the table. Paint her arms like Aurora's, and her smiles like Hebe's."

Robert Buchanan has given us, in his personal reminiscence of Thomas Love Peacock, a few delightful peeps at the author of *Nightmare Abbey*, and his library, "and it was a good one—full of books it was a luxury to handle, editions to make a scholar's mouth water, bound completely in the old style in suits as tough as George Fox's suit of leather."

Two other rooms we would make mention of—rooms round which our hearts often circle in dreamy lovingness. To us, as we now write, the rooms are still what they were, and the books yet look out from their resting-places upon their owners, and are silently satisfied to see them curl themselves up in their own particular “lap of luxury.” The *first* is the “cheery library” in Douglas Jerrold’s cottage at Putney, with its book-shelves running round the walls, and which were “carried no higher than would permit of easy access to the top shelf.” Concerning Jerrold, Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, in their *Recollections of Writers*, make friendly mention. “He had,” say they, “an almost reverential fondness for books—books themselves—and said he could not bear to treat them, or see them treated, with disrespect. He told us it gave him pain

to see them turned on their faces, stretched open, or dog's-eared, or carelessly flung down, or in any way misused. He told us this holding a volume in his hand with a caressing gesture, as though he tendered it affectionately and gratefully for the pleasure it had given him. He spoke like one who had known what it was in former years to buy a book when its purchase involved a sacrifice of some other object, from a not over-stored purse. We have often noticed this in book-lovers who, like ourselves, have had volumes come into cherished possession at times when their glad owners were not rich enough to easily afford book-purchases. Charles Lamb had this tenderness for books, caring nothing for their gaudy clothing, but hugging a rare folio all the nearer to his heart for its worn edges and shabby binding." The *second* room to which we would

make reference is the study of Samuel Palmer, so lovingly depicted in the memoir of that famous artist published by the Fine Art Society. "The study of Samuel Palmer at Furze Hill," writes his biographer, "was a small, comfortable room, to which only a chosen and privileged few were admitted. It had a large bow-window of western aspect, and looked towards Leith Hill. . . . Along the opposite end ran curtained shelves, laden with a heterogeneous but precious burden of plaster casts and gems from the antique, waxen models, colours, and the all-pervading books; while in one corner lay the old violin, silent now, upon which long years ago, in the quiet Kentish village, he had so often fingered many a beautiful old English air, with other sweet and ancient music. On one side were other and much larger shelves, holding portfolios, in

which were classified the innumerable sketches of all sizes, in all materials, and of all degrees of finish—a life's selection from Nature's material, landscape and figure. Under these in box-folios were the elaborate outdoor studies, English and Italian. . . . Some more book-laden shelves on either side the fireplace, and an easy-chair or so, completed the arrangement of the study—a room bare of the smallest pretension to luxury or superficial elegance, yet the birthplace of so many masterpieces of refined beauty and poetic sentiment, and so redolent of literature. Here while the north wind without was drifting the snow over the desolate landscape . . . Samuel Palmer would light the lamp (for gas was an abomination), and with drawn curtains would 'refresh the fire and have tolerable weather with the poets.' " Here is Palmer's own

confession: "Much as I love my calling, I am a true book-worm, and hope on my return to find, about once a month, a whole day for a Great Read! . . . Some place the bliss in action; I, in a dull, pattering, gusty December day, which forbids our wishes to rove beyond the tops of the chimney-pots—a good fire, a sofa strewed with books, a reading friend, and, above all, a locked door, forbidding impertinent intrusion. There should be a light dinner about one o'clock; then a little prosy chat—not too argumentative—just to help digestion; then books again, till blessed green-tea-time winds us up for *Macbeth*, or *Hamlet*, and ecstasy!"

Surely in the presence of such pictured homeliness, the "never contented spirit that ever seeks the new" must see that at least some ideals are realizable. Dreams

of glory and fame may prove as inconstant as the brown leaves of autumn which dance along the road coquetting with every passing breeze ; but the fireside remains, and the book, and the recollections of days gone by, and, perhaps, more dreams of what might yet be—a little sobered, no doubt, and with some of the wild readiness of belief in mankind extracted from them ; but dreams, nevertheless, and, as such, sure indications that the soul has not been smitten unto death. We have said that the book remains ; to the thoughtful reader and the book-lover this is tantamount to a declaration that there is still a “heaven on earth.”

II.

BOOKS.

If the Tenth Commandment really does include books, we freely confess to having often broken it. See how glaring it looks in definite black and white: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's—*books*." Horror of horrors!—and there are so many volumes that once belonged, and still belong, to other folks which we heartily wish were helping to crowd our already over-crowded shelves. Let us enumerate a few; and if any one of our readers, a professed book-lover, can hereafter, with clear conscience, affirm that the breach of the Commandment referred to does not weigh upon his soul, well—bah! he is no book-lover at all.

Leigh Hunt, once sending a friend a volume of *Montaigne*, mentioned

his having marked it “so that I shall be in a manner in your company if you read any of it.” In a well-chosen library we are, undoubtedly, in the presence of the wisest and best of the world’s great children. And yet at some seasons any great display of wisdom overtaxes and overpowers us; the tender friendships of purely literary souls are infinitely preferable. The very sight of a *Locke* or *Adam Smith* compels one to draw his hand across his head from sheer weariness; the insinuating grace, however, and tenderness, and imaginative humour which we know to be in our possession when we have our grasp upon a *Lamb*, or an honest *Isaac Walton*, serve at once to refresh our tired powers. Something of this kind Longfellow must have felt when he penned his well-known Proem to the *Waif*, in which he desires to be read to him:

“ Some simple and heartfelt lay,  
That shall soothe this restless feeling,  
And banish the thoughts of day.

“ Not from the grand old masters,  
Not from the bards sublime,  
Whose distant footsteps echo  
Through the corridors of Time.

“ For like strains of martial music,  
Their mighty thoughts suggest  
Life’s endless toil and endeavour ;  
And to-night I long for rest.”

The avidity with which first editions of famous books, and volumes containing authors’ autographs, or otherwise having special associations, are sought after and purchased is noticeable, and not in any way to be lamented. The book-hunter’s hobby is surely as sensible as any other, and makes, moreover, a direct appeal to both the heart and the head, the affections and the understanding. “ Sitting last winter among my books,” once wrote a famous author, “ . . . I began to consider how I loved the authors of those books ; how I loved them, too, not only

for the imaginative pleasures they afforded me, but for their making me love the very books themselves, and delight to be in contact with them." The volumes mentioned in the following list, could they but be gathered together, would, we think, not only form a small ideal collection, but would also cause their lucky owner to more than "delight to be in contact with them:"

Charles Lamb's *Chapman's Homer*, which Leigh Hunt once saw him kiss.

Any of the volumes mentioned in the following extract from Leigh Hunt's essay "My Books," in *The Indicator*: "The books I like to have about me most are *Spenser*, *Chaucer*, the minor poems of *Milton*, the *Arabian Nights*, *Theocritus*, *Ariosto*, and such old good-natured speculations as *Plutarch's Morals*. For most

of these I like a plain good old binding, never mind how old, provided it wears well; but my *Arabian Nights* may be bound in as fine and flowery a style as possible, and I should love an engraving to every dozen pages."

Dr. Johnson's copy of Fielding's *Amelia* which he read through without stopping; also his Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, the only book, he confessed, that ever took him out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise.

The presentation copy of *Frankenstein*, with its autograph gift-words from the author (Mary Shelley), to Mary Cowden Clarke.

Felix Mendelssohn's *Burns*. [Once happening to express a wish to read Burns's poems, and regretting that he could not get them before he left,

as he was starting next morning for Germany, Alfred Novello and C.C.C. (Charles Cowden Clarke) procured a copy of the fine masculine Scottish poet at Bickers's, in Leicester Square, on their way down to the boat by which Mendelssohn was to leave, and reached there in time to put into his hand the wished-for book, and to see his gratified look on receiving the gift. It is perhaps to this incident we owe the charming two-part song, "O wert thou in the cauld blast."—Clarke's *Recollections of Writers.*]

The presentation copy of the first edition of Leigh Hunt's translation of Tasso's *Amyntas* from the translator to Vincent Novello, with which is bound up in green and gold the "original" manuscript of the same. On the title-page (*vide Recollections of Writers*) is written in Leigh Hunt's

hand: "To Vincent Novello, from his affectionate friend the translator;" and inside the cover, in Novello's autograph, beneath his own name and address are these words: "I prize this volume, which was so kindly presented to me by my dear friend Leigh Hunt, as one of the most valuable books in my library; and I particularly request that it may be carefully preserved as an heirloom in my family when I am no more.—V. N."

The presentation copy of *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures* from Douglas Jerrold to Mary Cowden Clarke, in which the author wrote: "Presented with great timidity, but equal regard, to Mrs. Cowden Clarke."

The gift copy of *Bleak House* from Dickens to Mrs. Clarke, on the title-page of which the author wrote:

“ Mary Cowden Clarke, with the regard of Charles Dickens, December, 1853;” and accompanying which was a note containing the request: “ Pray give the book a place on your shelves, and (if you can) in your heart.”

Charles Cowden Clarke’s copies of Leigh Hunt’s works which the binders *would not* bind according to instructions.

[“ I can at least send you your long-promised books. The binder, notwithstanding my particular injunctions, and not having seen, I suppose, the colour of the fields lately enough to remember it, has made the covers red instead of green. You must fancy the books are blushing for having been so long before they came.—Yours most sincerely, LEIGH HUNT.”

The books here referred to were

*The Descent of Liberty* and *The Feast of the Poets*, with other pieces in verse. The binder to whom I (Charles Cowden Clarke) subsequently entrusted the task of putting Leigh Hunt's volume of poems, entitled *Foliage*, into an appropriately coloured cover of *green*, played me a similar trick to the one above recorded, by sending the book home encased in bright *blue*!—*Recollections of Writers.*]

The volume of Emerson, upon the fly-leaf of which is inscribed in the autograph of Professor Tyndall: “Purchased by inspiration.”

Robert Browning's copy of Laman Blanchard's *Lyric Offerings*. [What would I do to once again run (real running, for I was a boy), to Bond Street from Camberwell, and come back with a small book brimful of the sweetest and truest things in the

world?—*Robert Browning to Laman Blanchard.*]

Robert Browning's early copies of *Shelley* and *Keats*. [There came into his (Robert Browning's) hands a miserable pirated edition of Shelley's works; the window was dull, but he looked through it into an enchanted garden. He was impatient to walk there himself, but in 1825 it was by no means easy to obtain the books of Shelley. No bookseller that was applied to knew the name, although Shelley had been dead three years. At last, inquiry was made of the editor of the *Literary Gazette*, and it was replied that the books in question could be obtained of C. and J. Ollier, of Vere Street. To Vere Street, accordingly, Mrs. Browning proceeded, and brought back as a present for her son, not only all the works of

Shelley, but three volumes written by a Mr. John Keats, which were recommended to her as being very much in the spirit of Mr. Shelley. A bibliophile of to-day is almost dazed in thinking of the prize which the unconscious lady brought back with her to Camberwell. There was the *Pisa Adonais*, in its purple paper cover; there was *Epipsychedion*, —in short, all the books she bought were still in their first edition, except *The Cenci*, which professed to be in the second.—“The Early Writings of Robert Browning,” by E. W. Gosse, in *The Century Magazine.*]

John Stuart Mill’s copy of Robert Browning’s *Pauline*. [But a more curious incident was that a copy fell into the hands of John Stuart Mill, who was only six years the senior of the poet. It delighted him in the

highest degree, and he immediately wrote to the editor of *Tait's Magazine*, the only periodical in which he was at that time free to express himself, for leave to review *Pauline* at length. The reply was that nothing would have been more welcome; but that, unfortunately, in the preceding number the poem had been dismissed with one line of contemptuous neglect. Mr. Mill's opportunities extended no further than this one magazine; but at his death there came into Mr. Browning's possession this identical copy, the blank pages of which were crowded with Mill's annotations and remarks. The late John Forster took such an interest in this volume that he borrowed it,—"convey, the wise it call,"—and when he died, it passed with his library into the possession of the South Kensington Museum, where the curious relic of the youth of two

eminent men has at last found a resting-place.—*Ibid.*]

Charles Lamb's *Beaumont and Fletcher*. [(Bridget Elia *loquitur*)  
“ Do you remember the brown suit which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so thread-bare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent Garden ? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller, with some grumbling, opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the

relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating*, you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till daybreak—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity with which you flaunted it about in that over-worn suit—your old corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now

you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now."—*Elia's Essays: Old China*.—I cannot read Beaumont and Fletcher but in folio. The Octavo editions are painful to look at. I have no sympathy with them.—*Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading*.—It just caught my eye in a little extract-book I keep, which is full of quotations from Beaumont and Fletcher in particular, in which authors I can't help thinking there is a greater richness of poetical fancy than in anyone, Shakspeare excepted.—*Charles Lamb to Coleridge*.—It may interest some of the many lovers of Charles Lamb to hear that the copy of Beaumont and Fletcher which belonged to him, and was used in making selections for his specimens, is at present in the British Museum,

having been picked up accidentally at a sale a few years ago.\*—G. C. Macaulay's *Francis Beaumont: a Critical Study.*]

Any of the volumes mentioned by Lamb in his *Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading.*

Any book which Coleridge borrowed of Lamb. [Reader, if haply thou art blessed with a moderate collection, be shy of showing it; or if thy heart overfloweth to lend them, lend thy books; but let it be to such a one as S. T. C.: he will return them (generally anticipating the time appointed) with usury, enriched with annotations tripling their value. I have had

\* "It was the late Lieut.-Col. Cunningham who 'picked up' the precious folio, which at the sale of that scholar's books was purchased by the British Museum authorities for £25. It is strange that a volume of such surpassing interest excited so little competition."—*Athenaeum.*

experience. Many are these precious MSS. of his—(in *matter* often-times, and almost in *quantity* not unfrequently, vying with the original) in no very clerkly hand—legible in my Daniel;\* in old Burton;† in Sir Thomas Browne; and those abstruser cogitations of the Greville—now, alas, wandering in Pagan lands! I counsel thee, shut not thy heart nor thy library against S. T. C.—*The Two Races of Men.*]

The pocket-copy of Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* that belonged to

\* "The works of Samuel Daniel, 1718, 12mo., 2 vols. The annotations by Coleridge and Lamb himself are of great interest and of considerable extent. The *Civil Wars*, however, appeared to have attracted almost exclusive attention. There is very little writing in the other parts of the book; but there is the extract from *Tetley's Festival*, 1610, in Lamb's own hand on a spare page, which occurs in the *Dramatic Specimens*."—*Notes to Lamb's Complete Works*, 4 vols., Moxon, 1870.

† "The first edition, 1621, 4to., was the one which Lamb owned."—*Ibid.*

Wordsworth, and in which he wrote the stanzas commencing :

"Within our happy Castle there dwelt one."

The copy of Emerson's *English Traits* which belonged to Leigh Hunt. [Early in the morning he (Emerson) was once more in the library (of J. T. Fields). I found him there laughing over a little book he had discovered. It was Leigh Hunt's copy of *English Traits*, and was full of marginal notes, which amused Emerson greatly.—"Glimpses of Emerson," by Annie Fields, in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*.]

Alfred Austin's copy of William Morris's *Earthly Paradise*. [Under a blossoming thorn, stretched 'neath some umbrageous beech, or sheltered from the glare of noon by some fern-crested Devonshire cliff, with lazy summer sea-waves breaking at one's

feet—such were the fitting hour and mood in which—criticism all forgot—to drink in the honeyed rhythm of this melodious storier. Such has been my happy lot ; and I lay before this giver of dainty things thanks which even the absence of all personal familiarity cannot restrain from being expressed affectionately.—*The Poetry of the Period.*]

The copy of Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* which P.G. Patmore had in his pocket during the prize-fight to which he and Hazlitt went. [I put the book aside—not thinking of looking into it ; for I had removed it from my pocket only because it incommodeed me. But Hazlitt asked : “ What's that ? ” I handed the book to him with a smile ; and I shall not forget the burst of half-comic, half-pathetic earnestness with which he read the title—the *Nouvelle Héloïse* ! And

then his countenance fell as he turned over the pages silently, and the tears came into his eyes as he looked, for the first time, perhaps, for twenty years, on words, thoughts, and sentiments on which his soul had dwelt and banqueted in its early days, with a passionate ecstasy only equalled by that in which they had been conceived and written ; for the *Nouvelle Héloïse* was the idol of Hazlitt's youthful imagination, and he himself resembled its writer more curiously and remarkably than, perhaps, any one distinguished man ever resembled another.—Patmore's *My Friends and Acquaintance.*]

Shelley's volume of the same work. [After passing a fortnight in the hotel, the two travelling parties separated ; Byron and Polidori moving into the Villa Diodati, and Shelley, with Mary and Miss Clairmont, into

a small house hard-by on the Mont Blanc side of the lake. The Villa Diodati is very beautifully situated on the high banks, named Belle Rive, of the lake near Coligny. Shelley's house was termed the Maison Chapuis, or Campagne Mont Alègre. He and his would sometimes sleep at Byron's after sitting up talking till dawn. It was a remarkably wet summer, which did not, however, prevent Shelley from being out on the lake at all hours of the day and night. On the 23rd of June (1816), he and Lord Byron, accompanied only by two boatmen and his lordship's servant, undertook a voyage round the lake, lasting nine days; they visited Meillerie, Clarens, Chillon, Vevai, Lausanne. On this occasion Shelley read for the first time the *Nouvelle Héloïse*: "an overflowing (as it now seems, surrounded by the scenes which it

has so wonderfully peopled) of sublimest genius, and more than human sensibility." He would have liked to weep at the so-called Bosquet de Julie. In sailing near St. Gingoux (the scene of a similar incident in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*), the voyagers were overtaken by a tempest; and, through the mismanagement of one of the boatmen, were very nearly upset. Shelley, who somehow could never be taught to swim, considered himself in imminent danger of drowning. He refused assistance, sat on a locker, grasped the rings at both ends, and said he would go down. "I felt in this near prospect of death" (he wrote to Peacock on the 12th of July) "a mixture of sensations, among which terror entered, though but subordinately. My feelings would have been less painful had I been alone; but I knew that my companion would

have attempted to save me, and I was overcome with humiliation when I thought that his life might have been risked to preserve mine."—Rossetti's *Memoir of Shelley.*]

Mrs. Shelley's *Queen 'Mab*. [The following passionate outpouring of a woman's heart was exposed to the public gaze in the auction-room of Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge. It occurs on the fly-leaves of the first edition of Shelley's *Queen Mab* (Lot 63), the author's presentation copy to "Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, P.B.S.," with his autograph inscriptions, one at end in pencil: "You see, Mary, I have not forgotten you." On the fly-leaves at end Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin has written, "July, 1814.\* This book is sacred to me, and as no other creature shall

\* On the 28th of July, Shelley and Mary Godwin left England together.

ever look into it I may write in it what I please—yet what shall I write? —that I love the author beyond all powers of expression, and that I am parted from him. Dearest and only love—by that love we have promised to each other, although I may not be yours I can never be another's. But I am thine, exclusively thine :

By the kiss of love, by the glance none saw  
beside,  
The smile none else might render,  
The whispered thought of hearts allied,  
The pressure of the thrilling hand,

I have pledged myself to thee, and sacred is the gift. I remember your words : ' You are now, Mary, going to mix with many, and for a moment I shall depart ; but in the solitude of your chamber I shall be with you.' Yes, you are ever with me, sacred vision.

But ah ! I feel in this was given  
A blessing never meant for me ;  
Thou art too like a dream from heaven,  
For earthly love to merit thee."]

Shelley's *Ossian* with the poet's signature on the title-page, bought by a lucky collector lately in Booksellers' Row.

The copy of Foppens's rare edition of Petrarch's *Le Sage Resolu contre l'une et l'autre Fortune*, that once belonged to Sir Hudson Lowe, the gaoler of Napoleon, "and which may have fortified, by its stoical maxims, the soul of one who knew the extremes of either fortune, the captive of St. Helena."

The *Imitatio Christi* which belonged to J. J. Rousseau. [It was in 1827 that M. de Latour was walking on the quai of the Louvre. Among the volumes in a shop he noticed a shabby little copy of the *Imitatio Christi*. M. de Latour, like other bibliophiles, was not in the habit of examining stray copies of this work,

except when they were of the Elzevir size, for the Elzevirs published a famous undated copy of the *Imitatio*, a book which brings considerable prices. However, by some lucky chance, some Socratic dæmon whispering, maybe, in his ear, he picked up the little dingy volume of the last century. It was of a Paris edition—1751; but what was the name on the fly-leaf? M. de Latour read à J. J. Rousseau. There was no mistake about it; the good bibliophile knew Rousseau's handwriting perfectly well. To make still more sure, he paid his seventy-five centimes for the book, and walked across the Pont des Arts to his bookbinders, where he had a copy of Rousseau's works with a *facsimile* of his handwriting. As he walked, M. de Latour read in his book, and found notes of Rousseau's on the margin. The *facsimile* proved that

the inscription was genuine. The happy de Latour now made for the public office, in which he was a functionary, and rushed into the bureau of his friend the Marquis de V—. The Marquis, a man of great strength of character, recognised the signature of Rousseau with but little display of emotion. M. de Latour now noticed some withered flowers among the sacred pages; but it was reserved for a friend to discover in the faded petals Rousseau's favourite flower, the periwinkle. Like a true Frenchman, like Rousseau himself in his younger days, M. de Latour had not recognised the periwinkle when he saw it. That night, so excited was M. de Latour, he never closed an eye! What puzzled him was that he could not remember, in all Rousseau's works, a single allusion to the *Imitatio Christi*. Time went

on, the old book was not rebound, but kept piously in a case of Russia leather. M. de Latour did not suppose that "dans ce bas monde il fut permis aux joies du bibliophile d'aller encore plus loin." He imagined that the delights of the amateur could only go further—in heaven. It chanced, however, one day that he was turning over the *Oeuvres Inédites* of Rousseau, when he found a letter, in which Jean Jacques, writing in 1763, asked Motiers-Travers to send him the *Imitatio Christi*. Now the date 1764 is memorable, in Rousseau's *Confessions*, for a burst of sentiment over a periwinkle, the first he had noticed particularly since his residence at Les Charmettes, where the flower had been remarked by Madame de Warens. Thus M. Tenant de Latour had recovered the very identical periwinkle which caused the tear of

sensibility to moisten the fine eyes of Jean Jacques Rousseau.—Andrew Lang's *The Library.*]

Lord Byron's copy of Shenstone's *Works*. [An interesting Byron relic was sold last week at the auction-rooms of Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge. This was a copy of Shenstone's *Works in Verse and Prose* (three vols., 1777), with Byron's autograph signature in each volume, and with four pages of his writing in vol. iii. "eulogistic of Shenstone." Perhaps the chief interest in the relic lies in an epigram written by Byron in one of the volumes. This epigram we quote from memory as follows:

" 'I cannot understand,' says Dick,  
'What 'tis that makes my legs so thick.'  
" 'You do not understand,' says Harry,  
" 'How great a calf they have to carry.' "

*Athenaeum*, Nov. 21, 1885.]

The copy of *American Notes for General Circulation* which belonged

to Dickens' father. [It was a presentation copy to the author's father, and bears on each title his autograph, "John Dickens, 18 Oct., 1842." It also contains a document of two pages, 4to., entirely in the handwriting of Charles Dickens, and signed by him, being the original minutes of a meeting held on board the *Britannia* steamship from Liverpool to Boston, 21st January, 1842, the Earl of Mulgrave in the chair, Charles Dickens, Esquire, secretary and treasurer to the meeting. The resolutions were: 1. Recognising the nautical skill of the captain during a tempestuous voyage. 2. Subscription to purchase a piece of silver plate. 3. Appointment of a committee. Then follows an account of the captain attending to give thanks, the amount subscribed, and the inscription to be engraved on the plate; the whole finished with a very

characteristic signature of Dickens.—Fitzgerald's *Recreations of a Literary Man.*]

But we shall never cease enumerating these “to be desired” volumes. A few more, however, and we finish for the present. Of great and peculiar value are—the miniature 18mo. *Chaucer* which belonged to Charles Cowden Clarke, and in which Keats marked out his favourite passages; the folio copy of *Shakespeare* containing Keats' marginal note; the folio *Chapman's Homer*, the property of Mr. Alsager of the *Times*, the perusal of which called forth from Keats his famous sonnet, “On First Looking into Chapman's Homer;” either of the books to purchase which George Henry Lewes went without food; any volume of the two piles which supported the fire-tongs in Shelley's room at Oxford on the memorable

morning of Hogg's first call upon the poet; either of the copies of *The Necessity of Atheism* which Shelley boldly circulated among the college authorities, before whom he was subsequently summoned and by whom he was expelled from Oxford; the *Queen Mab* forwarded by its author to Byron; John Milton's *Bible*, recently purchased by the British Museum; Robert Buchanan's copy of his friend David Gray's *Luggie*; and Sydney Dobell's copy of Alexander Smith's first volume of *Poems*.\*

\* "You have seen doubtless by the papers that Alexander Smith is elected Secretary to the University. It was a hard-fought contest, and you would have been amused to drop suddenly on Edinburgh, and find me one of the canvassers. Simpson came for me unexpectedly, early in the day, to use my 'influence and testimony' with the town council; and, finding myself fairly in for it, I let what my hand found to do be done with my might, and did not leave off work till eight in the evening. Several influential people had got notions of Alexander's 'immorality.' I took the book with me, and gave extempore lectures on the pure passages to counteract the effect of the others."—*Sydney Dobell to his Father and Mother*.

Every great and remarkable man has had some one book as a favourite. That one book is, to us, sacred for all time on account of its associations, and is a treasure sedulously to be sought after in booksellers' catalogues, on stalls, and at auction-sales. Alas! the magnitude of the loss when Leigh Hunt caused his copy of Keats' *Lamia*, which was found on the person of the drowned Shelley, to be burnt with his remains. 'Twas a cursed and heinous, as well as a sacred and loving, act on the part of its owner. That volume was one for a bibliomaniac to dream, storm, lie, swear, go stark mad about.\*

\* "Firmly clasped in the hand of Shelley when the boat went down was a copy of *Æschylus* (not of Keats' poems). Shelley was passionately enamoured of *Æschylus*, and was apparently reading him at the very moment when the vessel was struck. . . . There was a volume of Keats in his breast-pocket, but the volume of *Æschylus*, as already intimated, was in his hand, and with the finger clasped in its pages. The volume still

That these rare association-volumes are getting to have a monetary as well as a sentimental value, is to be seen from a single instance which occurred at the sale of the late D. G. Rossetti's effects, at which Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, containing, inscribed in the author's autograph, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti, from his affectionate A. C. Swinburne," realized thirty-one guineas. It seems, on reading an account like

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opens at the page where Shelley had been reading when the storm arose, and the print of his finger is still to be perceived upon the page. The book was in his hand when the body was found, and it was taken from him by Mr. Trelawny as he laid him on the pile for the burning; the volume remains in the possession of Sir Percy Shelley. The poet had probably, however, been reading Keats' last volume not long before the disaster, for it was found with some of the pages doubled back, thrust away, probably in haste, into his breast-pocket. The copy of Keats had been lent by Leigh Hunt, who told Shelley to keep it till he could give it to him again with his own hands. As the lender would receive it from no one else, it was burnt with the body."—George Barnett Smith's *Shelley, a critical Biography*.

this, to be all a dream of the olden times, when usurers considered books as precious objects of pawn. And who shall say that Emerson may not yet, in some future migration on earth, learn the opposite to what he once ascertained of a surly bank-director, "that in bank-parlours they estimate all stock of this kind as rubbish"?





## THE ROMANCE AND REALITY OF DEDICATIONS.

WHAT romance as well as reality do we find in "dedications," pregnant as they so often are with love-indications or friendship-avowals—nay, sometimes even with the burden of grief's bitter self! As D'Israeli the elder confessed to always gather amusement from a preface, so confess I often to the getting of more pleasurable insight into the soul of an author from a perusal of his dedications, than from many readings of what he wishes his friends to look upon as his "works."

## I.

Shelley's love-stories are, to a great extent, told in his dedications. *Queen Mab* has this one prefixed to it :

“ TO HARRIET \* \* \* \* \*

“ Whose is the love that, gleaming through the world,  
Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn?  
Whose is the warm and partial praise,  
Virtue's most sweet reward ?

“ *Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul  
Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow?*  
Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,  
And loved mankind the more ?

“ *Harriet! on thine:—thou wert my purer mind;  
Thou wert the inspiration of my song;*  
Thine are these early wilding flowers,  
Though garlanded by me.

“ Then press into thy breast this pledge of love,  
*And know, though time may change and years  
may roll,*  
*Each flow'ret gathered in my heart  
It consecrates to thine.”*

The poem to which this is attached was first written in 1810, but was not finished before 1813, when it was printed for private circulation. In

the summer of 1809 Shelley had fallen in love with his cousin, Harriet Grove, who, when the poet was but nineteen, married some one else. Medwin is of opinion that to Miss Grove the poem in its original form was dedicated,\* for in his *Life of Shelley*, speaking of this attachment, he says: "Shelley's love, however, had taken deep root, as proved by the dedication to *Queen Mab*, written in the following year." But this statement of Shelley's friend receives flat contradiction from a letter of the poet's to his publisher, Mr. Ollier (quoted in *Shelley Memorials*), in which he tells him explicitly that the dedication in question was to his first wife. But we must return a step. Soon after his cousin's marriage Shelley eloped to Scotland with Harriet Westbrook,

\* Mr. H. Buxton Forman shares this belief of Medwin; Mr. W. M. Rossetti, on the contrary, treats it as sheer romancing.

a school-fellow of his sister, and daughter of a coffee-house keeper, nicknamed "Jew" Westbrook, and was there married in the early autumn of 1811, he being at that time nineteen years of age and his wife sixteen. Shelley distinctly affirms, as we have seen, that to this Harriet *Queen Mab* was dedicated; and yet three of his letters lead one to doubt whether, after all, his love for her was such as to cause him really to believe that she was (to quote from the dedication in question) "the inspiration of *his* song." His biographer, Hogg, has published two of these letters. The first refers to Harriet Westbrook and the writer's feelings regarding her. "*If I know anything about love,*" he says in it, "*I am not in love.*" The second also refers to Harriet: "Her father has persecuted her in a most horrible way, by endeavouring to compel her to go to school. She

asked my advice ; resistance was the answer, at the same time that I essayed to mollify Mr. W. in vain ! *And in consequence of my advice, she has thrown herself upon my protection. . . . I advised her to resist. She wrote to say that resistance was useless, but that she would fly with me, and threw herself upon my protection.*" From the third letter (written by Shelley almost immediately after his marriage, and first made public by Mr. W. M. Rossetti in a lecture printed in the *University Magazine*, Feb., 1878) we extract the following : "The frequency of her letters" (Harriet's, of course) "became greater during my stay in Wales. I answered them. They became interesting. They contained complaints of the irrational conduct of her relations, and the misery of living where she could *love* no one. Her letters became more and more gloomy. At length one

assumed a tone of such despair as induced me to quit Wales precipitately. I arrived in London. I was shocked at observing the alteration of her looks. Little did I divine its cause : she had become violently attached to me, and feared that I should not return her attachment. Prejudice made the confession painful. It was impossible to avoid being much affected. I promised to unite my fate with hers. . . . I proposed marriage for the reasons which I have given you, and she complied."

This mode of love-making and the subsequent events are rather peculiar comments on Shelley's declaration that this Harriet was his inspiration. After his marriage, however, he says : "Harriet is very happy, and I am very happy ;" and again : "When I come home to Harriet, I am the happiest of the happy." Fit expressions these to set beside that last verse of the dedication of *Queen Mab* :

“ Then press into thy breast this pledge of love,  
And know, though time may change and years  
may roll,  
Each flow'ret gathered in my heart  
It consecrates to thine.”

And yet three years after their marriage Shelley looked for the last time upon the face of his Harriet. He had seen Mary Godwin, for whom he conceived “a sudden, violent, irresistible, uncontrollable passion,” and in July, 1814, he, in company with his new love, left England. Some time afterwards he penned the following, in explanation of his conduct: “Everyone who knows me must know that the partner of my life should be one who can feel poetry and understand philosophy. Harriet is a noble animal, but she can do neither.” In 1816, she, whom he once declared to be “the inspiration of *his* song,” committed suicide by drowning. In the following December Shelley and Mary Godwin were married.

Early in 1818 was published *The Revolt of Islam* (issued at first under the title of *Laon and Cythna*), which the poet dedicated to his new wife in the following language :

“To MARY —————.

“ So now my summer task is ended, Mary,  
And I return to thee, *mine own heart’s home* :

\* \* \* \* \*

“ The toil which stole from thee so many an hour  
Is ended—and the fruit is at thy feet !  
No longer where the woods to frame a bower  
With interlaced branches mix and meet,  
Or where, with sound like many voices sweet,  
Waterfalls leap among wild islands green,  
Which framed for my lone boat a lone retreat  
Of moss-grown trees and weeds, shall I be seen :\*  
But beside thee, where still my heart has ever been.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Yet never found I one not false to me,  
Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone,  
Which crushed and withered mine, that could  
not be  
Aught but a lifeless clog until revived by thee.

\* \* \* \* \*

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\* Mrs. Shelley in her “ Note on the *Revolt of Islam* ” says : “ During the year 1817, we were established at Marlow, in Buckinghamshire. . . . The poem was written in his boat, as it floated under the beech groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the neighbouring country, which is distinguished for peculiar beauty.”

" No more alone through the world's wilderness,  
 Although I trod the paths of high intent,  
 I journeyed now ; no more companionless,  
 Where solitude is like despair, I went.

\* \* \* \* \*

" Now has descended a serener hour,

\* \* \* \* \*

And from thy side two gentle babes are born  
 To fill our home with smiles, and thus are we  
 Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn !  
*And these delights, and thou, have been to me  
 The parents of the song I consecrate to thee.*"

As a sequel to these lines may be quoted an extract from a letter addressed by the poet to Mr. Gisborne just before his death: "I only feel the want of those who can feel and understand me. Whether from proximity or the continuity of domestic intercourse, *Mary does not*. The necessity of concealing from her thoughts that would pain her necessitates this, perhaps. It is the curse of Tantalus that a person, possessing such excellent powers and so pure a mind as hers, should not excite the sympathy indispensable to their application to domestic life."

With what Shelley's thoughts and feelings were, somewhat later, towards the Lady Emilia Viviani, to whom his *Epipsychedion* was addressed, and towards Mrs. Williams (the Jane of some of his touching lyrics), we have nothing to do. Our object has been to confine our remarks to that portion of his heart's story which, with some show of reason, could be based upon the language of his dedications. In Shelley's love affairs we have the supremest revelation of the impassioned fickleness and lightsome changefulness of the true poetic nature. Not long after the issue of *Epipsychedion*, the poet wrote of it, to Leigh Hunt, as "a portion of me already dead," adding, as apologetic for the state of his mind: "Some of us have, in a prior existence, been in love with an Antigone, and that makes us find no full content in any mortal tie." Later on he writes:

“The *Epipsychedion* I cannot look at; the person whom it celebrates was a cloud instead of a Juno; and poor Ixion starts from the Centaur that was the offspring of his own embrace. If you are curious, however, to hear what I am and have been, it will tell you something thereof. It is an idealized history of my life and feelings. I think one is always in love with something or other; the error—and I confess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it—consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is, perhaps, eternal.”

The dedication to Leigh Hunt of *The Cenci* by Shelley, and the early volume of *Poems* by Keats recalls to our memory how inextricably were interwoven the fates of these three friends. At Hunt’s house Shelley first met Keats, who, in amicable rivalry of the *Revolt of Islam*, under-

took the writing of *Endymion*. It was Hunt who walked with Keats in one of the lanes near Highgate when they met Coleridge, and it was to him the author of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* turned, after he had shaken Keats' hand, and in a whisper said: "There is death in that hand." Alas! that the prophecy should so soon have been fulfilled. In 1821 Keats was buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome,\* the spot so

\* Lord Houghton writes: "Keats was buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, one of the most beautiful spots on which the eye and heart of man can rest. . . . In one of those mental voyages into the past, which precede death, Keats had told Severn that he thought 'the intensest pleasure he had received in life was in watching the growth of flowers,' and another time, after lying a while quite still, he murmured, 'I feel the flowers growing over me.' And there they do grow, even all the winter long, violets and daisies mingling with the fresh herbage, and, in the words of Shelley, 'making one in love with death, to think one should be buried in so sweet a place.'" Nowadays one of the earliest excursions of the literary man at Rome is to the graves of Keats and Shelley. And very tender are some of the

graphically described in Shelley's *Adonais*. The ensuing year the ashes of Shelley were laid to rest near those of his brother-poet, of whom he had sung with such sweet lament. It will be rememberéd that it was in connection with the arrival of Hunt in Italy that the voyage, which ended

productions born of these visits ; witness William Bell Scott's sonnet *On the Inscription, Keats' Tombstone*, and the etching, by the author, which accompanies it in his volume of poems. Note-worthy also is the mention made in two charming sonnets by Aldrich. We quote fully the one entitled *Three Flowers* :

“ Herewith I send you three pressed withered flowers :  
This one was white, with golden star ; this, blue  
As Capri's cave ; that, purple and shot through  
With sunset-orange. Where the Duomo towers  
In diamond air, and under hanging bowers  
The Arno glides, this faded violet grew  
On Landor's grave ; from Landor's heart it drew  
Its magic azure in the long spring hours.  
Within the shadow of the Pyramid  
Of Caius Cestius was the daisy found,  
White as the soul of Keats in Paradise.  
The pansy—there were hundreds of them, hid  
In the thick grass that folded Shelley's mound,  
Guarding his ashes with most lovely eyes.”

The reference here made to the daisy and the pansy will recall to our readers the fancy of Keats that he “ felt the *daisies* growing over him,” and the words of Shelley : “ *Pansies* let my flowers be.”

so fatally for Shelley, was undertaken ; and it was Hunt's own copy of Keats' last volume (*Lamia, Isabella, the Eve of St. Agnes, and other Poems*) which was found in Shelley's jacket-pocket when his dead body was washed ashore.

“Whom the gods love die young :” how the gods must have loved Keats —and Chatterton, to whose memory *Endymion* was dedicated !

The mention of Shelley's name bids us remember the friend who at one time received from the poet's purse an annual allowance of £100, and who subsequently, the lines having fallen to him in pleasant places, was referred to by Thackeray in *The Hoggarty Diamond* as “one Peacock, a clerk in the India House, and a precious good place he has, too.” In Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey*, Scythrop, the son and heir of Mr. Glowry, the owner of the Abbey, is intended for

a portrait of Shelley, who admitted its truthfulness, and was amused by it. In 1851 George Meredith published his first volume of *Poems* (now exceedingly rare, and fetching a high price when met with). This little book, dated from Weybridge, May, 1851, is dedicated to Thomas Love Peacock, Esq., "with the profound admiration and affectionate respect of his son-in-law," and contains the following unrhymed quatrain :

"THE POETRY OF SHELLEY.

"Seest thou a Skylark whose glistening winglets  
ascending  
Quiver like pulses beneath the melodious dawn?  
Deep in the heart-yearning distance of Heaven  
it flutters—  
Wisdom and beauty and love are the treasures  
it brings down at eve."

II.

MUCH of what we find in Robert Buchanan's dedications is charmingly autobiographical. His first

volume (*Undertones*, 1863) is gracefully dedicated to John Westland Marston, in these words :— “ To whom can I more appropriately dedicate these *Undertones* than to the man whose friendship has been a comfort to me during four years of the bitterest struggle and disappointment, and whose voice has whispered ‘ Courage ! ’ when I seemed faltering down the easy descent to Acheron ? The world knows least of your noble soul. High-minded, gracious-hearted, possessed of the true instinct of an artist, you have laid me under a debt of affection which I can never repay ; yet take the Book, as a token that I love and honour you.”

Another famous name appears in conjunction with the author’s on the dedicatory page of *London Poems*, published in 1866. This volume is inscribed to William Hepworth

Dixon, in terms none the less manly because of their genuine gratitude. " My dear Dixon," writes Buchanan,—" This book is inscribed to you ; and lest you should ask wherefore, I will refresh your memory. Seven years ago, when I was an ambitious lad in Scotland, and when the north-easter was blowing coldly on me, you sent me such good words as cheered and warmed me. You were one of two (the gentle, true, and far-seeing George Henry Lewes was the other) who first believed that I was fitted for noble efforts. Since then you have known me better, and abode by your first hope. Nor have you failed to exhibit the virtue, not possessed by one writer in a hundred, of daring to express publicly your confidence in an unacknowledged author. One word concerning the present volume. *London Poems* are the last of what I may term my 'poems of

probation,'—wherein I have fairly hinted what I am trying to assimilate in life and thought. However much my method may be confounded with the methods of other writers, I am sure to get quartered (to my cost, perhaps) on my own merits by-and-by. Accept these poems, given under a genuine impulse, and not merely in compliment. Of your fine qualities I will say nothing. Your candour may offend knaves, and your reticence mislead fools; but be happy in your goodness, and in the loving homage of those dearest to you."

The inscription of *White Rose and Red* (issued anonymously in 1873) "to Walt Whitman and Alexander Gardiner, with all friends in Washington," tells of the author's tour in America, and furthermore serves to recall to us his earnest championship, in eulogistic language, of "the good grey poet." The other volume of

poetry which Buchanan published without his name (*St. Abe and his Seven Wives*) is dedicated in picturesque and forcible language to "old Dan Chaucer," the soul and life of "wise old English *Jollity*."

The dedicatory lines of *The Book of Orm* to F. W. C. are tender and heartfelt :

" Flowers plukt upon a grave by moonlight, pale  
And suffering, from the spiritual light  
They grew in : these, with all the love and  
blessing  
That prayers can gain of God, I send to thee !

" If one of these poor flowers be worthy thee,  
The sweetest Soul that I have known on earth,  
The tenderest Soul that I can hope to know,  
Hold that one flower, and kneel, and pray for  
me.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

" Now, as thou risest gently from thy knees,  
Must we go different ways ?—thou followest  
Thy path ; I mine ;—but all go westering,  
And all will meet among the Hills of God !

" Thy ace sails with me on a darker path,  
And smiles me onward ! For a time, farewell !  
Wear in thy breast a few of these poor flowers,  
And let their scent remind my Friend of me !

“Flowers of a grave,—yet deathless ! Be my love  
 For thee as deathless ! I am beckon’d on ;—  
 But meantime, these, with all the love and  
 blessing  
 That prayers can gain of God, I give to thee !”

Whatever might be said and written by critics of the merits and defects of *The Drama of Kings*, there are, nevertheless, vigorous lines and distinct and definite out-spokenness in the inscription of it to “The Spirit of Auguste Comte”:

“Comte, look this day on France—  
 Behold her struck with swords and given to shame,  
 She who on bended knee  
 First to Humanity  
 Knelt, and with blood of Man heap’d Man’s new  
 Altar-flame.

“She who first rose and dared ;  
 She who hath never spared  
 Blood of hers, drop by drop, from her great breast;  
 She who, to free mankind,  
 Left herself bound and blind ;  
 She whose brave voice let loose the Conscience of  
 the West.

“Lo, as she passes by  
 To the earth’s scornful cry,  
 What are those shapes who walk behind so wan?—  
 Martyrs and prophets born  
 Out of her night and morn :  
 Have we forgot them yet?—these the great friends  
 of Man.

" We name them as they go,  
Dark, solemn-faced, and slow—

Voltaire, with sadden'd mouth but eyes still bright ;  
Turgot, Malesherbes, Rousseau,  
Lafayette, Mirabeau—

These pass, and many more, heirs of large realms  
of Light.

" Greatest and last, pass thou,  
Strong heart and mighty brow,

Thine eyes surcharged with love of all things fair ;  
Facing with those grand eyes  
The light in the sweet skies,  
While thy shade earthward falls, dark'ning my  
soul to prayer.

\* \* \* \* \*

" Go by, O mighty dead !  
My soul is comforted—

The Shepherd on the summit needs no prayers—  
Best worshipper is he  
Who suffers and is free—

That Soul alone blasphemers which trembles and  
despairs."

Now pass we on to the mingled  
sorrow and hope of the dedication,  
" To Mary," of Buchanan's *Selected  
Poems*, 1882. The words in which it  
is framed seem too heavily burdened  
with the heart's deepest feelings to  
be bandied about by every flippant  
reader and writer. Let them be

transferred to paper tenderly and with love; and may no rude hand press in to ruthlessly destroy the delicate bloom which tremblingly rests upon them: "Weeping and sorrowing, yet in sure and certain hope of a heavenly resurrection, I place these poor flowers of verse on the grave of my beloved Wife, who, with eyes of truest love and tenderness, watched them growing for more than twenty years." Let this volume, of picked poetic treasures, nestle ever close to the side of that other in which Mary's name is also mentioned with affection and veneration. Ah, the tale the years complete! The little book to which we have already referred—*Undertones*, Buchanan's first publication—bears as title to its prologue "To David in Heaven,"\* and to its epilogue "To

\* David Gray, the poet, the friend of Buchanan's early days.

Mary on Earth." Among the lines of the latter occur these :

" My heart to-night is calm as peaceful dreams,—  
Afar away the wind is shrill, the culver  
Blows up and down the moors with windy  
gleams,  
The birch unlooseneth her locks of silver  
And shakes them softly on the mountain streams,  
And o'er the grave that holds my David's dust  
The Moon uplists her empty dripping horn !  
Thither my fancies turn, but turn in trust,  
Not wholly sadly, faithful though forlorn.  
For you, too, love him, mourn his life's quick  
fleeting ;  
We think of him in common. Is it so ?—  
Your little hand has answer'd, and I know  
His name makes music in your heart's soft beat-  
ing ;  
And—well, 'tis something gain'd for him and  
me—  
Him in his heaven and me in this low spot—  
*Something his eyes will see, and joy to see—*  
*That you, too, love him, though you knew him*  
*not."*

Alas ! the poet's David and Mary are both "in heaven" now ; but who shall say that still the one is a stranger and unknown to the other ?

Comparatively few there are in

literary circles who fail to remember the hubbub raised by the publication, in the *Contemporary Review* for October, 1871, of an article entitled "The Fleshly School of Poetry," and bearing the signature, "Thomas Maitland." This article, subsequently enlarged and published in pamphlet-form, with the name of its avowed author, Robert Buchanan, upon the title-page, contained a fierce and sweeping criticism of the poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In the publication of this article much unpleasant and rancorous feeling had birth, which grew and spread until it culminated in an action for libel brought by Mr. Buchanan against the proprietor of the *Examiner*, which resulted in a verdict for the plaintiff, with £150 damages. This was in June, 1876. In 1881 was published *God and the Man, a Romance*, by Robert Buchanan, which contained, as dedi-

cation, the two following stanzas addressed to "An Old Enemy":

"I would have snatch'd a bay-leaf from thy brow,  
Wronging the chaplet on an honoured head ;  
In peace and tenderness I bring thee *now*  
A lily flower instead.

"Pure as thy purpose, blameless as thy song,  
Sweet as thy spirit, may this offering be ;  
Forget the bitter blame that did thee wrong,  
And take the gift from me !"

A later edition of the same book was enriched by a secondary and supplementary dedication, dated August, 1882, and inscribed in bold characters "To Dante Gabriel Rossetti":

"Calmly, thy royal robe of Death around thee,  
Thou sleepest, and weeping Brethren round  
thee stand—  
Gently they placed, ere yet God's angel crown'd  
thee,  
My lily in thy hand !

"I never knew thee living, O my brother !  
But on thy breast my lily of love now lies ;  
And by that token we *shall* know each other  
When God's voice saith, 'Arise !'"

In the preface to the last-named edition the author writes: "Since this work was first published, the

‘Old Enemy’ to whom it was dedicated has passed away. Although his name did not appear on the front of the book, as it would certainly have done had I possessed more moral courage, it is a melancholy pleasure to me to reflect that he understood the dedication, and accepted it in the spirit in which it was offered. That I should ever have underrated his exquisite work is simply a proof of the incompetency of all criticism, however honest, which is conceived adversely, hastily, and from an unsympathetic point of view; but that I should have ranked myself for the time being with the Philistines, and encouraged them to resist an ennobling and refining literary influence (of which they stood, and stand, so mournfully in need), must remain to me a matter of permanent regret.” Thus omnipotent Time heals the deepest wounds.

## III.

HOWEVER epigrammatic and throbbing with passion the poetry and some of the letters of Byron may be, his dedications are, with very slight exceptions, singularly destitute of anything but the baldest commonplace.

To "John Hobhouse, Esq., A.M., F.R.S., etc.," he dedicated more than one of his works in 1816 and 1818. In 1813 he inscribed his *Giaour* "To Samuel Rogers, Esq., as a slight but most sincere token of admiration for his genius, respect for his character, and gratitude for his friendship." The following year he published anonymously, in the same volume with Rogers' *Jacqueline*, his *Lara*, "an unnatural and unintelligible conjunction, which, however, gave rise to some pretty good jokes." "I believe," says Byron in one of his letters, "I told you of Larry and

Jacquy. A friend of mine was reading said Larry and Jacquy in a Brighton coach. A passenger took up the book and queried as to the author. The proprietor said, 'There are *two* ;' —to which the answer of the unknown was : 'Ay, ay—a joint concern, I suppose, *summot* like Sternhold and Hopkins.' Is not this excellent ? I would not have missed the 'vile comparison' to have escaped being the *Arcades ambo et contare pares*."

In December, 1821, was published *Sardanapalus*, and in the following November *Werner*, the latter of which bore the inscription, "To the Illustrious Goethe." It was Byron's intention to inscribe the earlier of these works to the great German, and he accordingly sent him a manuscript dedication, with an obliging inquiry whether it might be prefixed to the tragedy. Goethe was, however, by no means dissatisfied when, after a

long delay, *Sardanapalus* appeared without the Dedication. It was, nevertheless, printed in subsequent editions, and runs thus: "A stranger presumes to offer the homage of a literary vassal to his liege lord, the first of existing writers, who has created the literature of his own country, and illustrated that of Europe." That Goethe was pleased at this indication of the noble lord's admiration, is to be gathered from his own words: "Well knowing myself and my labours, in my old age, I could not but reflect with gratitude and diffidence on the expressions contained in this dedication, nor interpret them but as the generous tribute of a superior genius, no less original in the choice than inexhaustible in the materials of his subjects."

In 1817, Walter Scott reviewed Byron's Third Canto of *Childe*

*Harold* in the *Quarterly Review* in a manner pleasing to the author, who duly acknowledged it in 1821, in his dedication of *Cain*. On hearing from Scott that the dedication had been accepted "with feelings of great obligation," he wrote: "I am glad that you accepted the Inscription. I meant to have inscribed *The Foscari* to you instead; but, first, I heard that *Cain* was thought the least bad of the two as a composition; and, 2ndly, I have abused Southey like a pickpocket, in a note to *The Foscari*, and I recollect that he is a friend of yours (though not of mine), and that it would not be the handsome thing to dedicate to one friend anything containing such matters about another. However, I'll work the Laureate before I have done with him, as soon as I can muster Billingsgate therefor. I like a row, and always did from a

boy, in the course of which propensity I must needs say that I have found it the most easy of all to be gratified, personally and诗ically." Poor Southey!—"I'll work the Laureate before I have done with him," as if Byron hadn't already "worked" him. In a letter to Moore in 1818, Byron had written relative to *Don Juan*: "I have finished the first canto of a poem in the style and manner of *Beppo* . . . It is called *Don Juan*, and is meant to be a little quietly facetious upon everything. But I doubt whether it is not—at least, as far as it has gone—too free for these very modest days. . . . It is dedicated to Southey in good, simple, savage verse, upon the \* \* \* \*'s politics, and the way he got them." We give the first three of the seventeen dedicatory stanzas,\*

\* "This 'Dedication' was suppressed in 1819, with Lord Byron's reluctant consent; but shortly

leaving our readers to judge of their *goodness, simplicity and savageness*:

“ Bob Southe ! You’re a poet—poet-laureate,  
And representative of all the race,  
Although ’tis true that you turn’d out a Tory at  
Last—yours has lately been a common case.  
And now, my Epic renegade ! what are ye at ?  
With all the Lakers, in and out of place ?  
A nest of tuneful persons, to my eye  
Like ‘four-and-twenty Blackbirds in a pye ;

“ ‘ Which pye being open’d they began to sing,’  
(This old song and new simile holds good),  
‘ A dainty dish to set before the King,’  
Or Regent, who admires such kind of food ;  
And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,  
But like a hawk encumber’d with his hood—  
Explaining metaphysics to the nation—  
I wish he would explain his Explanation.

“ You, Bob, are rather insolent, you know,  
At being disappointed in your wish  
To supersede all warblers here below,  
And be the only Blackbird in the dish ;  
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,  
And tumble downward like the flying-fish  
Gasping on deck, because you soar too high,  
Bob,  
And fall, for lack of moisture quite a-dry, Bob !”

---

after his death its existence became notorious, in consequence of an article in the *Westminster Review*, generally ascribed to Sir John Hobhouse.” For several years the verses were sold in the streets as a broadside.

In 1821, Southey published a piece in English hexameters, entitled *A Vision of Judgment*, the preface to which contained some severe strictures on the "Satanic School" of poetry. After some observations on the peculiar style of the versification of his poem, Southey continues: "I am well aware that the public are peculiarly intolerant of such innovations; not less so than the populace are of any foreign fashion, whether of foppery or convenience. Would that this literary intolerance were under the influence of a saner judgment, and regarded the morals more than the manner of a composition; the spirit rather than the form! Would that it were directed against those monstrous combinations of horrors and mockery, lewdness, and impiety with which English poetry has, in our days, first been polluted! . . . These remarks are not

more severe than the offence deserves, even when applied to those immoral writers who have not been conscious of any evil intention in their writings; who would acknowledge a little levity, a little warmth of colouring, and so forth, in that sort of language with which men gloss over their favourite vices, and deceive themselves. What then should be said of those for whom the thoughtlessness and inebriety of wanton youth can no longer be pleaded, but who have written in sober manhood and with deliberate purpose?—Men of diseased hearts and depraved imaginations, who, forming a system of opinions to suit their own unhappy course of conduct, have rebelled against the holiest ordinances of human society, and hating that revealed religion which, with all their efforts and bravadoes, they are unable entirely to disbelieve, labour

to make others as miserable as themselves, by infecting them with a moral virus that eats into the soul! The school which they have set up may properly be called the Satanic School; for though their productions breathe the Spirit of Belial in their lascivious parts, and the Spirit of Moloch in those loathsome images of atrocities and horrors which they delight to represent, they are more especially characterized by a Satanic spirit of pride and audacious impiety which still betrays the wretched feeling of hopelessness wherewith it is allied."

Byron rejoined by stigmatizing Southey's poem as one "whose blasphemy is as harmless as the sedition of *Wat Tyler*, because it is equally absurd with that sincere production," and continued: "There is something at once ludicrous and blasphemous in this arrogant scrib-

bler of all work sitting down to deal damnation and destruction upon his fellow-creatures."

In reply to this, Southey addressed to the Editor of the *London Courier* a letter dated 5th of January, 1822, in which occurs the following : " His lordship has thought it not unbecoming in him to call me a scribbler of all work. Let the word *scribbler* pass ; it is an appellation which will not stick, like that of the *Satanic School*. But, if a scribbler, how am I one of *all work* ? I will tell Lord Byron what I have *not* scribbled—what kind of work I have *not* done. I have never published libels upon my friends and acquaintance, expressed my sorrow for those libels, and called them in during a mood of better mind—and then re-issued them, when the evil spirit, which for a time had been cast out, had returned and taken possession, with

seven others more wicked than himself. I have never abused the power, of which every author is in some degree possessed, to wound the character of a man, or the heart of a woman. I have never sent into the world a book to which I did not dare to affix my name; or which I feared to claim in a court of justice, if it were pirated by a knavish bookseller. I have never manufactured furniture for the brothel. None of *these things* have I done—none of the foul work by which literature is perverted to the injury of mankind. My hands are clean; there is no ‘damned spot’ upon them—no taint which ‘all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten.’ Of the work which I *have* done, it becomes me not here to speak, save only as relates to the Satanic School, and its *Coryphæus*, the author of *Don Juan*. I have held

up that school to public detestation, as enemies to the religion, the institutions, and the domestic morals of the country. I have given them a designation *to which their founder and leader answers*. I have sent a stone from my sling which has smitten their Goliath in the forehead. I have fastened his name upon the gibbet, for reproach and ignominy, as long as it shall endure.—Take it down who can!"

The result of all this was that Byron despatched, through the medium of Mr. Douglas Kinnaird, a "challenge" to the Poet Laureate. Mr. Kinnaird, however, seeing how absurd the whole business was, "put Lord Byron's warlike missive aside; and it never was heard of by Mr. Southey until after the death of its author."

Southey, in anticipation of this challenge from Byron, had written

the following reply, which, also, was not heard of “until after the death of its author.”

“SIR,—I have the honour of acknowledging the receipt of your letter, and do myself the pleasure of replying to it without delay.

“In affairs of this kind, the partners ought to meet upon equal terms. But to establish the equality between you and me, there are three things which ought to be done; and then a fourth also becomes necessary, before I can meet you on the field.

“*First.*—You must marry, and have four children; please to be particular in having them all girls.

“*Secondly.*—You must prove that the greater part of the provision which you make for them depends upon your life; and you must be under a bond of £4,000 not to be hanged, not to commit suicide, and not to be killed in a duel—which are

the conditions upon which I have effected an insurance of my own life for the benefit of my wife and daughters.

“ *Thirdly*.—I must tell three direct falsehoods concerning you, upon the hustings or in some other not less public assembly; and I shall neither be able to do this, nor to meet you afterward in the manner you propose, unless you can perform the fourth thing—which is :

“ That you must convert me from the Christian religion.

“ Till all this be accomplished, our dispute must be carried on without the use of any more iron than is necessary for blackening our ink and mending our pens: or any more lead than enters into the composition of the *Edinburgh Review*.—I have the honour to subscribe myself, Sir, yours, with all proper consideration,

“ ROBERT SOUTHEY.”

On the publication of the second edition of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (the first to which Byron's name was prefixed) Moore wrote a short terse note to the author, demanding satisfaction on account of passages in the poem which Moore considered gave the lie to a public statement of his concerning "an affair with Mr. Jeffrey some years since." This letter never got to Byron's hands; but in the following year a courteous explanation of the offending passage was given by him, and a friendship commenced between himself and Moore, which bore fruit in the now classic *Life, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*. In 1814, Byron inscribed *The Corsair* to his future biographer in the following friendly language: "I feel anxious to avail myself of this . . . opportunity of adorning my pages with a name, conse-

crated by unshaken public principle, and the most undoubted and various talents. While Ireland ranks you among the firmest of her patriots ; while you stand alone the first of her bards in her estimation, and Britain repeats and ratifies the decree, permit one, whose only regret, since our first acquaintance, has been the years he had lost before it commenced, to add the humble but sincere suffrage of friendship, to the voice of more than one nation."

In 1808, Byron issued a second edition of his *Poems* inscribed "To the Right Honourable Frederick, Earl of Carlisle, Knight of the Garter, etc., etc., by his obliged ward and affectionate kinsman, the author." In March of the following year, however, appeared *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, in which a change of sentiment on the part of

Byron towards his noble kinsman is noticeable. From a foot-note it is clear that the following lines were especially written for the Earl's benefit :

“Nor e'en a hackney'd Muse will deign to smile  
 On minor BYRON or mature CARLISLE.\*  
 The puny Schoolboy and his early lay  
 Men pardon, if his follies pass away ;  
 But who forgives the Senior's ceaseless verse,  
 Whose hairs grow hoary as his rhymes grow  
 worse ?  
 What heterogeneous honours deck the peer !  
 Lord, rhymester, petit-maitre, pamphleteer !  
 So dull in youth, so drivelling in his age,  
 His scenes alone had damn'd our sinking stage ;  
 But Managers for once cried 'Hold, enough !'  
 Nor drugged their audience with the tragic  
 stuff.”

In a note to a further allusion to Carlisle, affixed to a later edition of the same poem, Byron writes : “It

\* In the manuscript of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, in place of these two lines the author had :

“On one alone Apollo deigns to smile,  
 And crowns a New ROSCOMMON in CARLISLE.”

In later editions this appeared considerably altered :

“No Muse will cheer with renovating smile,  
 The paralytic puling of CARLISLE.”

may be asked why I have censured the Earl of Carlisle, my guardian and relation, to whom I dedicated a volume of puerile poems a few years ago ? The guardianship was nominal, at least as far as I have been able to discover ; the relationship I cannot help, and am very sorry for it ; but as his lordship seemed to forget it on a very essential occasion to me, I shall not burden my memory with the recollection. I do not think that personal differences sanction the unjust condemnation of a brother scribbler ; but I see no reason why they should act as a preventative, when the author, noble or ignoble, has, for a series of years, beguiled a 'discerning public' (as the advertisements have it) with divers reams of most orthodox, imperial nonsense. Besides, I do not step aside to vituperate the Earl : no—his works come fairly in review with those of other patrician

literati. If, before I escaped from my teens, I said anything in favour of his lordship's paper-books, it was in the way of dutiful dedication, and more from the advice of others than my own judgment, and I seize the first opportunity of pronouncing my sincere recantation. I have heard that some persons conceive me to be under obligations to Lord Carlisle: if so, I shall be most particularly happy to learn what they are, and when conferred, that they may be duly appreciated and publicly acknowledged. What I have humbly advanced as an opinion on his printed things, I am prepared to support, if necessary, by quotations from elegies, odes, episodes, and certain facetious and dainty tragedies bearing his name and mark.

“ ‘ What can ennoble knaves, or fools, or  
cowards ?  
Alas ! not all the blood of all the Howards.’

So says Pope. Amen !”

Why this change on the part of Byron? His biographer, Moore, shall explain in his own manner: "It was not till the beginning of this year (1809) that he took his Satire—in a state ready, as he thought, for publication—to London. Before, however, he had put the work to press, new food was unluckily furnished to his spleen by the neglect with which he conceived himself to have been treated by his guardian, Lord Carlisle. The relations between this nobleman and his ward had at no time been of such a nature as to afford opportunities for the cultivation of much friendliness on either side; and to the temper and influence of Mrs. Byron must mainly be attributed the blame of widening, if not of producing, this estrangement between them. The coldness with which Lord Carlisle had received the dedication of the young

poet's first volume was, as we have seen from one of the letters of the latter, felt by him most deeply. He, however, allowed himself to be so far governed by prudential considerations as not only to stifle this displeasure, but even to introduce into his satire, as originally intended for the press, the following compliment to his guardian :

“ ‘ On one alone Apollo deigns to smile,  
And crowns a new Roscommon in Carlisle.’ ”

The crown, however, thus generously awarded, did not long remain where it had been placed. In the interval between the inditing of this couplet and the delivery of the manuscript to the press, Lord Byron, under the impression that it was customary for a young peer, on first taking his seat, to have some friend to introduce him, wrote to remind Lord Carlisle that he should be of age at the com-

\* See page 124.

mencement of the Session. Instead, however, of the sort of answer which he expected, a mere formal and, as it appeared to him, cold reply, acquainting him with the technical mode of proceeding on such occasions, was all that, in return to this application, he received. Disposed as he had been, by preceding circumstances, to suspect his noble guardian of no friendly inclinations towards him, this backwardness in proposing to introduce him to the House (a ceremony, however, as it appears, by no means necessary or even usual) was sufficient to rouse in his sensitive mind a strong feeling of resentment. The indignation thus excited found a vent, but too temptingly at hand—the laudatory couplet I have just cited was instantly expunged, and his satire went forth charged with those vituperative verses against Lord Carlisle."

In the inscriptions of the poems which Byron laid at the feet of the fair sex we miss altogether the warmth of feeling and impassioned utterance which we found in some of Shelley's dedications. In 1812 the following dedicatory stanzas of the first cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* were addressed to the Lady Charlotte Harley (afterwards the wife of Brigadier-General Bacon), who had not then completed her eleventh year :\*

“ TO IANTHE.

“ Not in those climes where I have late been  
straying,  
Though Beauty long hath there been match-  
less deem'd ;  
Not in those visions to the heart displaying  
Forms which it sighs but to have only  
dream'd,

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\* At Byron's request Westall painted the portrait of this “ juvenile beauty,” which was engraved for Finden's *Illustrations of the Life and Works of Lord Byron*.

Hath aught like thee in truth or fancy seem'd ;  
Nor, having seen thee, shall I vainly seek  
To paint those charms which varied as they  
beam'd—

To such as see thee not my words were weak ;  
To those who gaze on thee what language could  
they speak ?

“ Ah ! mayst thou ever be what now thou art,  
Nor unbeseem the promise of thy spring,  
As fair in form, as warm, yet pure in heart,  
Love's image upon earth without his wing,  
And guileless beyond Hope's imagining !  
And surely she who now so fondly rears  
Thy youth, in thee, thus hour'ly brightening,  
Beholds the rainbow of her future years,  
Before whose heavenly hues all sorrow disappears.

“ Young Peri of the West !—'tis well for me  
My years already doubly number thine ;  
My loveless eye unmoved may gaze on thee,  
And safely view thy ripening beauties shine ;  
Happy, I ne'er shall see them in decline ;  
Happier, that while all younger hearts shall  
bleed,  
Mine shall escape the doom thine eyes assign  
To those whose admiration shall succeed,  
But mix'd with pangs to Love's even loveliest  
hours decreed.

“ Oh ! let that eye, which, wild as the  
gazelle's,  
Now brightly bold or beautifully shy,  
Wins as it wanders, dazzles where it dwells,  
Glance o'er this page, nor to my verse deny  
That smile for which my breast might vainly  
sigh,

Could I to thee be ever more than friend ;  
 This much, dear maid, accord ; nor question  
 why  
 To one so young my strain I would commend,  
 But bid me with my wreath one matchless lily  
 blend.

“ Such is thy name with this my verse entwined ;  
 And long as kinder eyes a look shall cast  
 On Harold’s page, Ianthe’s here enshrined  
 Shall thus be first beheld, forgotten last :  
 My days once number’d, should this homage  
 past  
 Attract thy fairy fingers near the lyre  
 Of him who hail’d thee, loveliest as thou  
 wast,  
 Such is the most my memory may desire ;  
 Though more than Hope can claim, could Friend-  
 ship less require.”

In the summer of 1819, Byron wrote *The Prophecy of Dante* at the instigation of the Countess Guiccioli, to whom he dedicated it in two stanzas of no particular interest or merit :

“ Lady ! if for the cold and cloudy clime  
 Where I was born, but where I would not die,  
 Of the great Poet-Sire of Italy  
 I dare to build the imitative rhyme,  
 Harsh Runic copy of the South’s sublime,  
 Thou art the cause ; and howsoever I  
 Fall short of his immortal harmony,  
 Thy gentle heart will pardon me the crime.

“Thou, in the pride of Beauty and of Youth,  
Spakest ; and for thee to speak and be obey'd  
Are one ; but only in the sunny South  
Such sounds are utter'd, and such charms  
displayed,  
So sweet a language from so fair a mouth—  
Ah ! to what effort would it not persuade ?”

Of much more interest is the description by the dedicatee of the origin of its composition : “On my departure from Venice, Lord Byron had promised to come and see me at Ravenna. Dante's tomb, the classical pine-wood, the relics of antiquity which are to be found in that place, afforded a sufficient pretext for me to invite him to come, and for him to accept my invitation. He came in the month of June, 1819, arriving at Ravenna on the day of the festival of Corpus Domini. Being deprived at this time of his books, his horses, and all that occupied him at Venice, I begged him to gratify me by writing something on the subject of Dante ; and with his usual facility and rapidity, he composed his *Prophecy*.”

## IV.

FROM amongst our great modern teachers we summon to memory, for our present purpose, two who especially have laid decided hands on the future they hope for beyond the grave. Professor Max Müller remembers with all a father's love the daughter whose earthly presence was once life and light to him. The inscription of his *Hibbert Lectures* for 1878 runs thus: "To her whose dear memory encouraged, directed, and supported me in writing these lectures, they are now dedicated as a memorial of a father's love." And the loving and poetic, yet truly realistic remembrance of days gone by is not the least noticeable element of the following dedication of Renan's *Life of Jesus*: "TO THE PURE SOUL OF MY SISTER HENRIETTA, WHO DIED AT BYBLUS, ON THE 24TH SEP-

TEMBER, 1861. Dost thou recall, from the bosom of God where thou reposest, those long days at Ghazir, in which, alone with thee, I wrote these pages, inspired by the places we had visited together? Silent at my side, thou didst read and copy each sheet as soon as I had written it, whilst the sea, the villages, the ravines, and the mountains were spread at our feet. When the overwhelming light had given place to the innumerable army of stars, thy shrewd and subtle questions, thy discreet doubts, led me back to the sublime object of our common thoughts. One day thou didst tell me that thou wouldest love this book —first, because it had been composed with thee, and also because it pleased thee. Though at times thou didst fear for it the narrow judgments of the frivolous, yet wert thou ever persuaded that all truly religious

souls would ultimately take pleasure in it. In the midst of these sweet meditations, the Angel of Death struck us both with his wing: the sleep of fever seized us at the same time—I awoke alone! . . . . Thou sleepest now in the land of Adonis, near the holy Byblus and the sacred stream where the women of the ancient mysteries came to mingle their tears. Reveal to me, O good genius, to me whom thou lovedst, those truths which conquer death, deprive it of terror, and make it almost beloved."

In 1859 John Stuart Mill dedicated his work *On Liberty* to the memory of her who had truly been a companion to him: "To the beloved and deplored memory of her who was the inspirer, and in part the author, of all that is best in my writings—the friend and wife whose exalted sense of truth and right was

my strongest incitement, and whose approbation was my chief reward—I dedicate this volume. Like all that I have written for many years, it belongs as much to her as to me; but the work as it stands has had, in a very insufficient degree, the inestimable advantage of her revision; some of the most important portions having been reserved for a more careful re-examination, which they are now never destined to receive. Were I but capable of interpreting to the world one half the great thoughts and noble feelings which are buried in her grave, I should be the medium of a greater benefit to it than is ever likely to arise from anything that I can write, unprompted and unassisted by her all but unrivalled wisdom."

Somewhat similar in feeling to the foregoing are the lines prefixed by S. C. Hall to his *Rhymes in Council*,

and which are, in reality, the true dedication, although the formal one is worded thus: "This book of Versified Aphorisms is, by direct sanction of Her Majesty, dedicated to the Grandchildren of The Queen." The lines to which we refer are these: " Since they [the Aphorisms] were written—while they were passing through the press—the partner of my pilgrimage, the participator in all my labours and cares, my companion, friend, counsellor, and wife, during fifty-six years, has been removed from earth and from me, from many friends who dearly loved her, and from a public by whom she was largely appreciated since the publication of her first Book (followed by, I think, two hundred and fifty Books) in the far-off year 1828. These verses are hardly less hers than mine. If I have striven—in humble, but fervent and prayerful, hope—to inculcate

rectitude, goodness, love, sympathy, gentle and generous thinking, humanity, patience, virtue, and piety, Faith, Hope, and Charity—my work was suggested, encouraged, sustained—I will reverently add, inspired—by her.

“This Book, therefore, although written by me, I hope may be regarded as a MONUMENT TO HER MEMORY.”

There is no uncertain ring about these words ; they go straight to the heart as nothing but truth can. By them one is also reminded of that other union similarly happy, and, in more than one respect, alike in worthy results—that of Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, to which the latter refers in the preface to *Recollections of Writers* : “Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke may with truth be held in tender remembrance by their readers as among the happiest of married lovers for more than forty-

eight years, writing together, reading together, working together, enjoying together the perfection of loving, literary consociation; and kindly sympathy may well be felt for her who is left to singly subscribe herself,

“ Her readers’ faithful servant,

“ MARY COWDEN CLARKE.”





## AN ODD CORNER IN A BOOK- LOVER'S STUDY.

"Each one of the mob of curious things he preserved had some story linking it with others, or with his peculiar fancies."—BURTON'S *Book-Hunter*.

RECENT publications of known authors, strongly bound in serviceable calf, are amongst the necessities of life, inasmuch as they contain food pure and simple; but stray volumes lovingly extracted from out-of-the-way nooks in old book-shops, and having special associations, are to be classed with the luxuries of existence; they have the fragrance of the East about them, and the mystery of summer-dreams.

The little walnut-shelved recess on my left as I now sit, is, gentle reader, my association-corner, my luxury-receptacle, the spot of all my house best loved. The book-cases, reaching half-way up the walls, and extending round the other portions of the room, and which teem with the easily procured works of great men, answer but as bath-rooms and bed-chambers and dining-halls; they but fit me for everyday existence, giving me health and strength to live my life and do my work. But the corner I have whispered of is where I rest and dream, and forget that

“Life is real, life is earnest,”

—at least for me. My own individuality is lost, merged in that of the authors or previous owners of the volumes which silently nestle there. Than that little nook

“The violet bed’s not sweeter.”

In my anticipations of the future I  
look there for

“A bower quiet for *me*, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams . . . and quiet breath-  
ing.”

The volumes, now I look round upon  
them, seem trembling with suggestiv-  
ness and story—with too much, I  
fear, to be interpreted in this short  
notice. But let them “tremble”  
until they weary.

The top shelves, green and red and  
old-calfy, yet disdaining not boards,  
some clean, others questionable, are  
Lamb's domains. The first bit of  
print there, with its side to the wall,  
is a thin paper-covered almanack  
with “Notes to the Calendar”  
facing the woodcuts. One of these  
notes, daintily composed for such a  
trifle, drew my attention for the first  
time, when a boy, to the “gentle  
Elia.” Let it be held in reverence.  
Stretching along from this are early

editions of Lamb-literature, including the *Tales from Shakespeare*, with Blake's and Mulready's designs. Let me pause and reckon. There are nineteen volumes altogether, without counting the bound extracts from journals and newspapers; and they contain most of what has been given of worth by and concerning the humourist of the India Office. I must not, however, fail to notice the admirable book of Mr. Ainger, and the odd number, standing sentinel-like, of *London Society*, to which we owe Charles Mathews's story of the ripe live Stilton, which Lamb volunteered to l-l-l-lead home from the cheesemonger's shop. Patmore's *My Friends*, and S. C. Hall's *Memories*, may as well be counted as Lamb-literature, as also Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age*, and Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, and in a lesser degree Pebody's *Authors at Work*. These stand on

the second shelf—faithful attendants in case of need. I had almost forgotten what Lord Lytton's *Lucretia* was doing in such company; but the terrible story of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright flashes across my mind, and I remember it all. Lord Lytton's novel was founded on the career of the "light-hearted Janus" of the *Essays of Elia*, the "dandy art-critic of the *London Magazine*, the friend of Hazlitt, De Quincey, and Barry Cornwall," who at last came to an ignominious death in a convict settlement. Here also is George Dyer's *Poet's Fate*. Lamb used to speak very tenderly of Dyer: "poor George" he used to style him; and in a letter to Coleridge he affirmed that "all poems are *good* poems to George—all men *fine geniuses*." Next to this stands Charles Lloyd's *Duke D'Ormond and Beritola*, published by Longman in 1822. Evidently a gift-

copy to some friend, it contains the author's autograph on the title-page. But what a volume is locked up in the fact that its leaves, with few exceptions, are uncut! Let them remain so—a perpetual reproach to the narrow friendship that had no element of self-denial in it. The friend should have read it through, if but to quote to its author, with a clear conscience, a line here and there. Oh, it does smack mightily, in acknowledging such a gift, to run an odd sentence of our author's into our own composition—to run it in with a vengeance, to make it fit tightly, so that it cannot be separated from the context without a super-human tug. Alas! perhaps our "presentation copies" are also uncut. Lloyd, it will be remembered, contributed with Coleridge and Lamb to the little 12mo. volume of poems published in Bristol in 1797; and it

was he who on one occasion met Lamb and his sister "slowly pacing together a little footpath in Hoxton fields, both bitterly weeping, and found, on joining them, that they were taking their solemn way to the asylum," at which Mary Lamb spent the days in which her mind was "not at home." That Lamb felt a great respect for Lloyd is to be gathered from the verses he addressed to him in 1797, in which occurs the following couplet :

"I'll think less meanly of myself,  
That Lloyd will sometimes think of me."

Adjoining Lloyd's solitary production are first editions of Bernard Barton's *Poems by an Amateur*; *Poems*; *Napoleon*; *Poetic Vigils*; and the posthumous *Letters and Poems* edited by his daughter. The best criticism ever uttered on Barton's work is that of Lamb, who in the

course of conversation with P. G. Patmore once said that "he did not write nonsense, at any rate. He was dull enough, but not nonsensical. He writes English, too, which the magazine poets of the day do not." Looking back now upon the days in which I gathered these Bartons together, I can remember but one reason for doing so: namely, that, the author was considered by Lamb to have the elements of worth about him sufficient to demand the famous letter, unique in its way, which contains the memorable sentences that, since their first publication, have drawn down upon them, from literary lads, heartiest blessings and direst curses: "Keep to your bank, and the bank will keep you. Trust not to the public: you may hang, starve, drown yourself, for anything that worthy personage cares." To many how musical these words are,

now that the young days of wild impossible dreams are past!

But who shall tell with fitting pathos the story associated with the little darkly covered octavo which next meets our eye? It is only Dante Rossetti's translation of the *Early Italian Poets*, published by Smith, Elder and Co., in 1861, and for which Rossetti designed as a frontispiece the drawing reproduced in the *English Illustrated Magazine* for October, 1883; but on the last leaf of the volume, under the errata, appears the advertisement: "Shortly will be published, 'Dante at Verona and other Poems,' by D. G. Rossetti." Need we tell again of the overwhelming sorrow that stepped in upon the poet's life and laid its forbidding finger upon his published intention? The following year "Dante at Verona and other Poems" were laid in MS. in his wife's coffin, and for a while the

poet bade farewell to his dreams. Fame was to him worthless, life without an object, now that his beautiful and dearly-loved companion had been ruthlessly stolen from his side. For more than seven years his MS. lay in its strange resting-place, and was exhumed at last only at the earnest persuasions of valued friends, who would not suffer the world to be for ever deprived of its rightful possession, or the poet of his just meed of poetic recognition. There, alongside of *The Early Italian Poets*, is the first edition of the delayed *Poems*, given to the public in 1870, and in return for which the public gave Rossetti a name amongst the greatest of poets then living.

Passing by Rossetti's other volumes (one of them a reproduction of *The Early Italian Poets*), and William Bell Scott's *Poems by a Painter*, and the

completed *Poems*, illustrated by his own and Alma Tadema's beautiful etchings, and containing his graceful *Dedicatio Postica* to Swinburne, Rossetti and William Morris, we come to five little books which together tell a powerful tale of poetic struggle against odds sufficient to annihilate a whole multitude of less determined (if not less gifted) natures. Four of these volumes are the productions of Scotchmen—namely, David Gray, John Bethune, William Thom and Robert Nicholl; the remaining one that of a Scotchwoman—Janet Hamilton. We all know the story of poor David Gray, the friend and partner in the early struggles of Robert Buchanan: how he came up to London with limitless ambition and untrained powers; how he wrote *The Luggie*, and died before he had fairly entered upon the battle of life. The story of the author of the second

volume is a dark one and strange: “A hard-tasked hand-labourer, aspiring, at the most, to be a gardener or forester, and often breaking stones for months together on the roads, writing on his knees as his only desk, and on brown-paper bags and every shred that would carry ink, in the scanty time which he filched from toil or sleep—trying a didactic poem on the model of Cowper’s ‘Task’ at seventeen, and finishing a sad and pious life under thirty, after experiments in all kinds of literary production.” What an existence! The author of the third volume—William Thom—was a simple weaver of Dundee, who at one time, in consequence of the failure of certain business houses, found himself and his family starved down to an uncertain five shillings a week. Pawning all his worldly goods, he started with them on a book-hawking expedition,

the particulars of which are given in the preface to his little book *Rhymes and Recollections*. With heartsickening earnestness he tells of how they journeyed on "through the busy singing world of spring which had become a nuisance, and through the loaded fields that bore nothing for them, not knowing where their couch might be that night, or where their grave to-morrow." With all a father's tenderness and a poet's vivid seizing upon details, he relates the death of his little girl "from exposure on a cold night when they had been refused shelter at several farmhouses," and how he sat up in the early dawn "watching the fluttering and wheeling of the sparrows till he could find some one to speak to about the burial." One evening, with fivepence in his pocket, he endeavoured to obtain shelter for the night at Methven ; but the price of such accommodation

was sixpence, which must be forthcoming before the weary travellers could take off their "shoon,"—and so to obtain the penny Thom dipped his dry flute in the little burn, and played the "Flowers of the Forest." At one time he resolved to seek rest in the House of Refuge at Aberdeen; but the receipt of five pounds in return for his poem, "The Blind Boy's Pranks," set him again upon his feet. How heavily laden with lead-like sorrow are his words of acknowledgment: "O Sir! it is difficult for those in other circumstances to think what a strife is his who has to battle lip-deep in poverty, with a motherless family and a poetical temperament—the last the worst, inasmuch as it enhances tenfold the pain that is frequent, and the joy that is rare." The life of Nicholl is but another chapter of the sad story. Herding cattle all the summer, he

made the wherewithal to pay for his winter's schooling. He read *Kenilworth* in the woods at thirteen, and wrote verses at eighteen. Burning these productions, he applied himself to the study of Milton's prose, Locke, and Bentham. Being apprenticed to a grocer at Perth, he put by his hard-earned savings until they accumulated to two pounds, with which he set up his mother in a little shop. His experience about this time is that he finds himself "fitter to do his work after a night's writing than others after a night's idiotical amusement." Next he opens a shop as a bookseller in Dundee, but fails. Then he reaches a very throne of power and wealth as editor of a Leeds newspaper at a hundred a year. Ill-health, however, comes in upon him with rapid stride, and in his twenty-fourth year he dies in the arms of his mother, who had worked

all through the harvest-time for silver to pay for the journey to reach him.

Janet Hamilton, the authoress of *Poems and Ballads*, the fifth of our volumes by Scottish writers, was the daughter of a shoemaker, and became in early life the wife of her father's assistant, by whom she had ten children. Although she began when very young to compose verse, and had when between seventeen and nineteen years of age produced about twenty pieces in rhyme, she could not write until in her fifty-fourth year. After her marriage, her reading hours were taken from her sleep, and many an hour she spent in this way, holding the book in one hand, and nursing the infant in her lap with the other.

These are the stories of the earnest battling of persevering souls against external and opposing circumstances which those five unpretentious little

volumes tell me. Who shall say with any appearance of truth that the value of a book depends altogether upon what is contained within its covers ?

Next (and with them we finish for the present) are Lackington's *Memoirs* and Milton's *Paradise Regain'd*. The former, a small octavo, is the edition published by Whittaker in 1830, and is quite an ordinary book, to be picked up at any old bookstall. Its value, however, lies in the fact that on pages 204 to 208 inclusive (the pages containing the supposed letters of John Wesley, one on the religious sect he had established, the other to a young lady with whom he had fallen in love, and to whom he made the poetic confession :

“ With thee conversing, I forget  
All times, all seasons, and their change ”),

the margins are literally covered with notes bearing the initials of a once

popular President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. The Milton is a fourth edition of "*Paradise Regain'd*, a Poem in four books, to which is added *Samson Agonistes* and poems upon several occasions compos'd at several times. The author John Milton. London, Printed for Jacob Tonson, within *Gray's-Inn* Gate next *Gray's-Inn* Lane, 1705." It is a beautifully clean copy, and has inserted one of the rare portraits of the author. What makes it, however, to be prized is the autograph of Leigh Hunt upon its title-page. I love to think that this volume shared with Hunt his prison-life, which he tells us was not entirely devoid of brightness and poetry. How familiar has become his description of the room he converted into a charming study : " I papered the walls with a trellis of roses ; I had the ceiling coloured with clouds and sky ; the barred

windows were screened with Venetian blinds ; and when my book-cases were set up, with their busts and flowers, and a pianoforte made its appearance, perhaps there was not a handsomer room on that side the water. I took a pleasure, when a stranger knocked at the door, to see him come in and stare about him. The surprise on issuing from the borough, and passing through the avenues of a jail was dramatic. Charles Lamb declared there was no other such room except in a fairy-tale." For this Milton I gave eighteenpence.





## GENIUS AND CRITICISM.

To a thoughtful reader the perusal of contemporary complaining criticism is a source of great amusement; and this feeling is heightened by the consideration of how critics come by their rules, and deepened into a half-sadness by the recollection of the disastrous effects of some of their ill-timed endeavours.

How do critics come by their rules ? A genius is born of an age. With powerful individuality he speaks of the workings of his soul, and his relation to the men and women surrounding him. Men admire what he has done, and the manner in which it has been done ; and then comfort-

ably feed their vanity by supposing that in the light shed from the fire of this one soul they are able to read clearly, and without possibility of mistake, all pertaining to genius, even to the mode of its expression. These apparent discoveries they then cast into the mould of their own minds, and turn them out, a complete set of rules, by which the composition of the future is to be judged. They constitute themselves princes and judges, and pass sentence accordingly in all the plenitude of their self-imposed arrogance. Another voice comes ; another genius is born. But the critics are puzzled. The voice has not the compass and modulation of its predecessor ; and in endeavouring to understand it the law-makers flounder about and get entangled in the nets of their own ignorant bewilderment. The only way out of their difficulty, they think,

is by denying the divinity of the voice, and this they do with little or no compunction. Luscious, mellow pears are pleasant enough to the palate; but what fools we should be were we to despise the grape and the melon on account of their dissimilarity to the pear. What would be thought of a botanist who, when a new plant was placed in his hands for examination, should declare it to be an artificial composition, a *pseudo* thing, however natural its character, because he, on reference to the Linnæan classification, and running over the families, orders, and subdivisions, had been unable to find any account of it? In the Dark Ages, what ludicrously vain attempts were made to find in Ptolemy's system of geography all modern localities! A town, hill, or river was hardly considered to have a certain position, unless it appeared in that topo-

grapher's olden charts. And not very far remote from this period is an age in which it was argued that Saturn and Uranus could not be possessed of so many satellites as the telescope ascribed to them, because men could not bring their minds to grant the possibility of the secondary planets excelling the primary in number.

What a deal of nonsense is uttered in the present day under cover of the "eternal laws" that govern composition. It seems to us as if, sometime in the past, the critics held a convention at which they cut out and manufactured a garment into which poets were to be slipped for trial: if they fitted the garment, and the garment fitted them, they were to have their credentials, not otherwise. Dryden did very well, and so did Pope, and Byron and Scott, and a number of others. One now and

then caused a little trouble to the august examiners, but they generally managed to get him in ultimately. At length a strange candidate appeared. His rugged genius scattered the beauties of invention to right and left of him.

“He could not ope  
His mouth but out there flew a trope.”

His presence peopled the earth and air with warm living creations. In Spring-time the green buds *leaped* into existence; the arrow *quivered* with anxiety to leave the bowstring, to cleave with lightning-speed the ambient air. “But he has no method,” said the critics. “Where is the smoothness and regularity as of a well-ordered garden that we must have? Let us try the garment.” And so they turned and twisted the poet, and turned and twisted the garment, but there was no such thing as a fit. Some proposed stretching

the garment as ladies stretch their gloves ; to this others dissented, fearing the stitchings were not strong enough. One spoke of the expediency of taking out the lining ; but he got laughed at for his pains. At length, after numerous shiftings and shufflings, they gave up the case as altogether bad ; *they* could make no poet out of the candidate, whatever else he might be, and so they left him accordingly. We have heard of the duckling that got pecked at, and spitefully used, because in the sequel it proved to be a swan.

Our remarks have been exemplified of late years by the treatment Walt Whitman has received from the hands of some of his critics. They think of his ruggedness, and contrast it with the smoothness and liquidity of Pope, the pathos of Mrs. Hemans, the lyric perfection of Burns, and the cloying sweetness and

fancy of Moore. They cluster round his poems like a lot of landscape-gardeners at the foot of one of our hills, who put their heads together and decide that it would look very much better were it not for this jutting crag, or that out-of-the-way peak. Had they but been acting-creators at the shaping of the world, they are sure they would have made a far better hill than that one. Perhaps they would also have made every grain of sand alike, and trimmed off the odd edges of the clouds : who can tell ? The vanity of man—a forked radish with a head fantastically carved, as Carlyle calls him—is past finding out.

Let it, however, be understood here that we do not advocate a bold disregard, on the part of an author, of all limitations of form in literary productions, for the mere sake of being considered above such trifles.

An impatience with set forms is not always a sign of genius ; and limitations should not be dispensed with if they afford room enough for individuality to assert itself. We have no need to "build more stately mansions" until the old ones have proved too small and cramped for our use.

But are style and matter separable in our most characteristic literature? or is the former but the natural outcome of the latter? Pope says,

"The sound must seem an echo to the sense," and we have numerous instances in our literature of how completely this echoing has been brought about with happy results. It is impossible to imagine the "Song of the Shirt" and "The Raven" in other forms than those in which they exist, and in which the sound so perfectly echoes to the sense.

Any work destined for immortality must, in a manner, be original, and the outcome of some particular experience of its author. Verses were first composed to be chanted to the wild dances of our ancestors, and apparently satisfied their limited requirements in this direction. Some of the most beautiful and liquid poems of Moore were composed as the poet walked about the lawn behind his little cottage at Sloperton ; and Charles Lamb used to declare that Milton's "Paradise" smelt of the candlelight. We have nothing particular to advance against songs for the heated, crowded atmosphere of the drawing-room, or against sentimental poems to be wept over in secret by æsthetic and woe-be-gone maidens, and by languishing milky-watery young men ; but we must claim indulgence, and in most cases admiring appreciation for

poems, however rough-hewn, that will swing with music to the robust stride across purply uplands in the first fresh breeze of the morning, and to the health-giving climb up the sides of rugged hills.

To blame a work, is tantamount to a declaration on the part of the critic that he, personally, stands on a greater elevation, and sees further into, and knows more about the subject under consideration, than his author does. This undoubtedly accounts for the quantity of fiddling, complaining criticism with which many of our so-called critical journals abound. The critic fears to be thought beneath his author, and so doles out a limited number of praises and an unlimited quantity of slur. He usually is as little fitted to deal with the task he sets himself as a manikin is to growl about the anatomy of a star, setting forth at the same

time his own thoughts as to how it should be formed. An American poet writes : "A friend of mine once devoted a great deal of time to a very careful and thorough article upon a poet. . . . He afterwards showed me the critical notices it drew forth, and those which treated the subject with the coolest possible air of knowledge were written by men who knew nothing whatever about it." In these hypercritical days we want more hero-worship, a greater reverence for genius, and a more just and delicate appreciation of individual worth. Instead of this, some would have us believe that all men are much of a sameness ; that the old days in which the gods lived on earth are for ever gone ; that the cry of genius is but a stuttering excuse for peculiarity ; and that men, instead of being free-born individuals, personally accountable to a higher law

than narrow critical philosophy ever dreamed of, are but "turkeys driven with a stick and red clout to the market."

What if the work of genius is sometimes peculiar? We owe a greater debt to eccentricity than at first appears. Every new turn of thought, every extraordinary discovery in science, every deep realization of some religious truth, has been called eccentricity;—in some cases a harder word than this has been used.

Too often, alas! our system-keepers have been obstacle-makers. Plutarch says that when Cicero, as a young man, visited the oracle at Delphi, the advice given him was to make his own genius, not the opinions of others, the guide of his life. And yet it seems the fate of all originality of thinking to be immediately opposed. "The botanical system of Linnaeus was at one time the object of ridicule

for all Stockholm. Copernicus so much dreaded the prejudice of mankind against his treatise on *The Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies*, that he detained it in his closet for thirty years together. When Kepler published his first rational work on comets, it was condemned, even by the learned, as a wild dream. Bacon was misunderstood at home in his own day ; it was long after his death before English writers ventured to quote him as an authority. Montesquieu gave his *Esprit des Loix* to be read by that man in France whom he conceived to be the best judge, and in return received the most mortifying remarks.”\*

If Shakespeare had unduly considered the critics, we should probably be without those fantastic medleys (?) of his, which are at present justly considered some of the

\* D'Israeli's *Literary Character*.

glories of our literature. A great foreign writer, criticizing these productions, asks concerning Shakespeare: "Is he not powerful enough to follow laws of his own?" and then, like the Irishman, answers his own question: "He is; and the poetry of Shakespeare finds an outlet in the highest grade of unreasoning and creative imagination. Despising ordinary logic, it creates therefrom another; it unites facts and ideas in a new order, apparently absurd, at bottom legitimate; it lays open the land of dreams, and its dreams deceive us like the truth." Sir Joshua Reynolds, in one of his admirable *Discourses on Painting*, defends this same idea of genius being a law to itself. He says: "The rules by which men of extraordinary parts, and such as are called men of genius, work, are . . . of such a nice texture as not easily to admit being expressed in words. . . .

Unsubstantial, however, as these rules may seem, and difficult as it may be to convey them in writing, they are still seen and felt in the mind of the artist; and he works from them with as much certainty as if they were embodied, as I may say, upon paper." If William Blake had not obeyed this law of his own, and pursued a wild, strange path, his peculiar individuality would have been smothered, and the masterly *essay of Swinburne* unwritten. If Wiertz had not followed a similar course, the gallery of paintings which is now one of the curiosities of Brussels would be unknown. If Wagner, the musician, had not, by sheer force of genius and will, pushed forward his way in spite of the persistent opposition he experienced at every step of his progress, the probability is that his name would be unknown, and the musical world

destitute of the compositions about which so many of his admirers rave.

We hail with gladness the few faint indications we have of a better state of affairs in the criticism of the future. In the prospectus issued some short while ago by the projectors of a new monthly magazine, they declared their conviction that "the best and most difficult function of the critic is the discovery of merits rather than of defects;" and promised "that while we shall praise nothing that is not good for the sake of being pleasant, we shall never be tempted into injustice for the mere sake of being smart." Another journal professes to have for its only enemies "unjust, corrupt, and cruel men, pretenders, upstarts, snobs, and humbugs." We reckon it also a promising sign that some high-class reviews have a rule that their critical notices be signed by the writers. By

far too many "stabs in the dark" are inflicted under cover of editorial nobody-ness. To a restless out-of-work looking for a life-mission, we respectfully offer the suggestion that he should immediately set about finding one of these literary nobodies, thereby solving for us the question whether it has a body to chastise or a soul to save.

Who was the first author? and who the first critic? Emerson, looking for a moment at man through Darwin's spectacles says: "They combed his mane, they pared his nails, cut off his tail, set him on end, sent him to school, and made him pay taxes, before he could begin to write his sad story." We have always spoken rapturously of Emerson's wisdom; and here, in the lines we have just quoted, we have further proof of it, for does he not make sadness immediately dependent on

the payment of taxes? If the secret of popularity lies in the ability to appeal touchingly to some universal experience, surely by this single reference to the all-absorbing tax question Emerson has made for himself a fame which cannot die. Lamb declares that the want of candles accounts for the seriousness of the elder poetry. "It has a sombre cast, derived from the tradition of those unlantern'd nights. Jokes came in with the candle. . . . This is our peculiar and household planet. Wanting it, what savage unsocial nights must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unillumined fastnesses! They must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What repartees could have passed, when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled a neighbour's cheek to be sure that he understood it?" No doubt crabbed and complaining

critics existed in those days. In imagination we see and hear it all. Some disagreeable old stick has probably eaten an enormous dinner, and sits in a stupid snoozy state, in the darkest and warmest corner of the candleless cave. A joke is born of the active brain of one of the younger portion of the community, and launched out into the darkness. Anxious for the success of his venture, the jokist, settling down all-fours, creeps about the cave handling the faces of his companions. At last the snoozy old *gourmand* is reached. Rousing up, he shouts out angrily :

“ What made you scrawl my face ? ” To which the traveller in search of smiles answers meekly :

“ Only to see if my joke had got over this way—that’s all, indeed.”

Then, with a warm ejaculation on his tongue, the interrupted sleeper returns to his snooze, while the

youthful wit sinks into silence, determined to the lowest depths of his determination not to risk another joke till the future comes bright with its candlelight.

We freely admit that many unsolved and unsolvable questions cluster around our subject—such as, for instance, How far genius receives *from* the age what it gives back *to* the age? To what extent it is affected by the pains and strivings amidst which it is born and lives? How far criticism should follow in the wake of creative genius, learning with humility the lessons it has to teach? and, In what particulars criticism should take the lead, pointing out to genius safe and sure ground upon which to tread? One point is, however, tolerably clear: criticism must be old-fashioned and conservative to but a limited extent, and must beware of attempting to rein in the winged

steed ; rather it must follow on to know more fully the whys and wherefores of the untamable mystery. The criticism that did its duty when the voice of genius was rude and savage, albeit natural ; when men lived out face to face with nature, and were mainly interested in the exploits of their chiefs and the courage and strength of their heroes, and sang their praises in wild songs full of exaggerated passion, is totally unfit to cope with successive waves of civilization and refinement. Criticism must be progressive, moving ever on to a wider sphere of extended sympathy. It must take its lessons from the liberal age of Chaucer, with its Canterbury pilgrimages ; from Spenser, with his ideal and allegory ; from Shakespeare, with his recovery of the stores of classical learning, and his honest speech of the results of the freedom and richness of thought produced by

the Reformation; from the times of the *Spectator* essayists, full of the refinement of fashion, when men laid aside passion as a thing dead and forgotten; from Hazlitt, who tells of the change made in the world by the French Revolution. And if his lessons have been well learned, the critic, standing here in this age of ours, in which refinement has reached a state hitherto unknown, will see that just and righteous criticism can only be the result of his grafting upon his views of the past a knowledge of the real wants of the present, a sympathy with the aims of its literary workers, and a prophetic ken carrying him far on into the future. "A true critic must not only be a universal scholar, but as clear-conscienced as a saint, and as tenderly impressible as a woman. After that he may be rigid as Minos." But he needs yet another qualification, or, shall we rather term it, a

practical deepening of this tender impressibility. He must be keenly alive to the presence of genius wherever found ; and it sometimes lies far down out of the way of ordinary vision, hidden by foreign and extraneous matter, for a man can be at the same time human and yet a genius, because the inspiration which rules him in his greatness comes and goes like a disease.

"Tis an ill wind that blows no one any good. In an old poem called *The Mirror of Fools*, written by a Canterbury monk, we have the history of an ass, Brunellus, who studied at Paris, and entered in succession all the monastic orders, but was content with none of them. He was about to form a new order, when his master caught him, and sent him back to his old occupation. If critics would but be satisfied to lead writers of shallow imitations and humdrum

monotonous rubbish back into a legitimate channel of honest work—say, at the plough or at the carpenter's bench—they would earn for themselves the hearty praise of all sensible men. An ass can but be an ass, and there is no room for long ears in literature.





## ON THE PURSUIT OF LITERATURE IN ODD MOMENTS.

ONE of the blackest pages of history is that on which we find inscribed the lives of some of our literary men. Too often, alas! it has been the case that; while the soul has been lifted up in the contemplation of some transcendent thought by which other minds are to be made wealthy, the body, barely and raggedly covered, has wanted due nourishment and care. Cervantes, the immortal genius of Spain, is supposed to have wanted bread; and Camoens, the solitary pride of Portugal, deprived of the necessities of life, perished in a hospital at Lisbon.

It all seems so much like the old Greek story of Prometheus, who dispensed such great gifts to men, yet could not free himself from the chains which held him secure in the Scythian desert. Insults from purse-proud patrons have been not the least of authors' troubles; Coleridge, in his gathering together subscribers to the *Watchman*, was reminded by one to whom he applied that twelve shillings a year was a large sum to be bestowed on one person when there were so many objects of charity. In the face of such occurrences we do not wonder that Charles Lamb wrote so strongly to his friend Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet, who contemplated abandoning the desk and trusting for bread to the issue of his pen: "Throw yourself rather from the steep Tarpeian rock—slap-dash, headlong upon pikes . . . I have

known many authors want for bread, some repining, all agreeing they had rather have been tailors, weavers—what not? than the things they were. I have known some starved, some go mad, one dear friend 'dying in a workhouse.' Oh, you know not—may you never know!—the miseries of subsisting by authorship!" An echo to this is given in the advice proffered by Walter Scott to one of his correspondents: "Whatever pleasure you may find in literature, beware of looking to it as a profession . . . If ever you have to look to literature for an absolute and necessary support, you must be degraded by the necessity of writing whether you feel inclined or not, and, besides, must suffer all the miseries of a precarious and dependent existence." The profession of literature has been to many what the *Ceffyl-y-dwfr*, or water-

horse, was believed by the Celts to be, viz., an evil spirit who, in the shape of a horse, would induce the unwary stranger to mount him; and then, soaring into the clouds, or dashing over river and mountain, would suddenly melt into air or mist, precipitating the rider into destruction.

It is not in our province just now to inquire how far the miseries of literary life are due to failings similar to those which Herodotus tells us afflicted certain Thracians, who considered idleness to be the mark of a gentleman, but to dig the ground as most disgraceful: Apart from this consideration, the picture drawn above is certainly not one to be pleasantly contemplated by any aspirant to future glory in literature, and God knows there are many such nowadays, when so much that is utterly unreasonable and ridiculous is written about the power of the

pen, the glory of literature, and the superiority of a quill-driver over a warrior. But there is grim consolation and encouragement of a kind to be obtained in spite of the foregoing; and those who, under pressure of circumstances, find themselves compelled to write, that they may eat, should remember that full-blown literary men are necessary as pain and evil are necessary—and martyrs. A great number, however, who earn their bread in this manner would be far happier following the plough, and winning honours at a ploughing match.

It is impossible to produce the best work the mind is capable of producing, under continued harassing anxiety concerning pecuniary ways and means. In authorship, the one great advantage is never to be compelled to furnish a publisher with so much matter at so much per

sheet—and to need the money. Tom Moore could not work without a retainer, and we doubt whether *Lalla Rookh* would have been written had it not been for an open offer in the simplest form from the Longmans, merely stipulating that upon Moore giving into their hands a poem as long as *Rokeby*, he should receive the sum of £3,000. At this time, however, the poet was in receipt of £500 a year from the copyright of his songs. It is in some respects a pity that a poet cannot live upon poetic food, having for his diet, “fog, morning mist, and a slice of the densest cloud within his reach, sauced with moonshine,—whenever he could get it.”

“Literature should depend for its culture, not on the exclusive devotion of time and energy, but rather on hours and seasons snatched from the pursuit of worldly interests by

intelligent and earnest-hearted individuals." Independence should first be sought by studying the branch of industry which lies most within our reach, and secondary to this, literature may honourably and happily be pursued. When literature is the sole business of life, it becomes a drudgery: when we are able to resort to it at certain times, it is a charming relaxation. Ruskin says it is only by labour that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labour can be made happy, and the two cannot be separated with impunity. Looking, then, at literature as an enjoyable occupation when the day's worry and toil are over, we cannot fail to notice its superiority over other hobbies, and how completely it takes a man out of himself and his surroundings, giving to him truly that change which is sweetest rest.

“The man who can spend his days in a purely material atmosphere, and sing at night, has genuine pluck in him ;” and what Rogers, the banker-poet, once said to Madame de Staël, —“ I shall never forget the delight with which on returning home (from the bank) I used to read and write during the evening,” ought to be enough to make any “green poet,” who wails about the cruel world and the harsh realities of life, as opposed to the beautiful realm of the ideal, heartily ashamed of himself.

We cannot well imagine a greater pleasure than to sit of a winter’s evening by a cosy fireside deep in the pages of some favourite author. At such a season Ossian cannot fail to throw his spell around us ; and the raging of the storm without and the rattle of the casement are but so many wild, weird choruses to his songs. Or on a summer’s evening

to lie lazily beside some babbling mountain-brook, letting the music of the wandering wind in the pines overhead mingle with the sweet voices that come to the soul from some healthy country-loving writer. In such a mood Thomson's *Seasons* becomes a veritable handbook, assisting us to the understanding of some of Dame Nature's secrets; Thoreau and his Walden hut are also fit subjects for contemplation at such a time. And then as the sun goes down in the west, causing the shadows to creep over the distant hills, and stretching immense bands of purple and gold across the horizon, thoughts that help to draw the mind into unison with nature are treasures of untold value. Or perchance, out of harmony with ourselves and the world, we go out musing into the fields; no star of hope shines for us; if the stars

really peep out, they are but poor commonplace things studding the sky as tin-tacks driven into blue baize ; and all nature's sounds are discordant and jarring. But a great and solemn thought, long ago gathered from some author, is carried to our weary minds by some invisible power, and lo ! the air swims with life ; the sky is the front of heaven, and the stars are fiery shapes ; a beauty and a grandeur as of a new revelation wrap us round and about, and all of the present and the future is encircled in the golden glory of hope.

We must not fail, however, to warn our readers of the dangers attendant on out-of-doors pursuit of literature. It is said that, in a certain year when the Nile did not rise to its usual height, and a famine was apprehended in Egypt, a poet, Abu Jaafar by name, sat by the river-side examining a piece of poetry by the rules of

his art. Some one passing by, not understanding him, imagined he was uttering a charm to hinder the rise of the river, and pushed him into the water, out of which he failed to find his way; and if he had, his poetry would surely have been left behind: the very notion of a man in a dripping condition being a poet is simply ridiculous. Nature does so delight to topple over our pretensions, and to help us to find our true level; if we set ourselves up one day, the next she will most decidedly pinch our noses blue with the cold, or give us the face-ache, and then laugh at us and ask (quite meekly, of course), "Where is your poetry now?"

A great treasure is the possession of well-lined bookshelves, filling the nooks and vacant corners of our rooms. And books, after all, are not mere quires of printed paper,

held together in the clasp of covers ; they strike the lover of literature rather as the souls of great men, dead and living, earnestly waiting to give up the choicest parts of their choice lives to all who will but have them. " Through the portals of literature we are ushered into the presence of the great men of all ages ; and all who have mastered the mystery of the English alphabet have no need to go seeking friendships among feeble ordinary men. They have Homer, Plato, Shakespeare, and Milton for their friends —friends who unbosom their longings and satisfactions, their inmost hopes and their darkest fears, and who never bore with their forced companionship, and are only garrulous when desired." Old Doctor Sheridan once wrote to his friend Dean Swift, then in London on a visit :

"While you converse with lords and dukes,  
I have their betters here—my books :  
Fixed in an elbow-chair at ease  
I choose companions as I please.  
I'd rather have one single shelf  
Than all my friends, except yourself ;  
For after all that can be said  
Our best acquaintance are the dead."

Emerson, in one of his addresses to the students of Howard University, said, "The great masters of thought, the Platos—not only those that we call sacred writers, but those that we call profane—have acted on the mind with more energy than any companions. I think that every remarkable person whom you meet will testify to something like that, that the fast-opening mind has found more inspiration in his book than in his friend."

Reading is necessary to the daily progression that should inevitably attend every human being. We are so inclined to content ourselves with what is commonest, and the spirit

and the senses so easily grow dead to the impressions of the beautiful and perfect, that everyone should study to nourish in his mind the faculty of feeling these things. "To this end," says Goethe, "one ought every day at least to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture, and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words." Pliny the Younger affirmed that he never read a book so bad, but he drew some profit from it.

A great deal of time spent in laborious reading is not at all necessary in order that every inquiring mind should get a tolerable knowledge of the best works in literature. In the evenings of one week spent by the winter fireside, and by the help of an English translation of Homer (a good prose literal translation is the best), the beauties of the *Iliad* can be unfolded. In like manner

other great authors can be persuaded to give out their words of wisdom. The qualifications needed to be carried to the work are simply a desire to know and a power to say "I will know."

Then there are the seasons in which we are weak enough to take pen in hand to spoil the clean face of a sheet of foolscap by setting down thoughts which cannot live. A certain momentary hope and happiness are born of such an exercise. Full of the cheery glow of self-deception, we scribble and scribble until the paper is covered, or the pen fails, or a loose brick tumbles down the chimney, or the cat gets in for an evening dance with the crockery; either of which occurrences is sufficient to place an effectual barrier in front of literary ambition for the time being. And then, if in our sane moments the

lines we have penned appear vapid and unhealthy, or we fail to get sympathy from some dearest friend to whom we have shown, under cover of strictest secrecy, the ambitious result of that great flood of questionable inspiration, we can still remember for our solitary satisfaction and comfort that all great literature has had fearful odds to contend against, and that in our particular case,

“ Though the rhyme be ragged,  
Tattered and gagged,  
Rudely rain-beaten,  
Rusty, moth-eaten,  
Yf ye take welle therewithe,  
It hath in it some pithe.”

(Ah, what a source of untold happiness is thorough self-deception, and how miserable we should all be if to us were granted free, full answers to Burns’ petition :

“ O wad some power the giftie gie us  
To see ousrels as others see us !”)

Then if, after all, in healthy disgust we cram our manuscript into the

flames, the effect of our writing lives with us for good ; we have been heaping up strength for some future endeavour, which, perchance, with increased knowledge and artistic power, together with various learnings and unlearnings, may have its desired effect. Nothing in this world is lost ; and perhaps it is really no disadvantage to a candidate for entrance into the world of literature that the door be several times slammed in his face as a preliminary.

Literature is also a true friend in distress ; a friend indeed in cases of need. "As the ivy which has long twined its graceful foliage about the oak, and been lifted by it into sunshine, will, when the hardy plant is rifted by the thunderbolt, cling round it with its caressing tendrils, and bind up its shattered boughs, so is it beautifully ordained that 'literature,' which is the mere dependant and

ornament of man in his happier days, should be his stay and solace when smitten with sudden calamity, winding itself into the rugged recesses of his nature, tenderly supporting the drooping head, and binding up the broken heart." Coleridge's testimony is on record: "Under the pressure of long and painful disease, poetry has been to me its own exceeding great reward; it has soothed my afflictions, it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments, it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me." The ability to lose one's self at will in the world of imaginative creation has saved many a lover of literature from hours of unnecessary care and sorrow, enabling him to ignore difficulties under which he would otherwise have been crushed.

*Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row, London.*









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